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MORE TALKS
BY THE
OLD STOREKEEPER

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MORE TALKS BY THE OLD STOREKEEPER

By FRANK FARRINGTON

Author of

"Talks by the Old Storekeeper"
"Retail Advertising—Complete"
"Store Management—Complete," Etc., Etc.

BYXBEE PUBLISHING COMPANY
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PREFACE

The first "Talks by the Old Storekeeper" which appeared a little while ago in book form met with so cordial a reception that I have felt it a pleasure to write the second series.

It is scarcely possible for the last word ever to be said on storekeeping and no matter how much any man may know about merchandising and store management and advertising, practically every other man in the business has discovered some things that the first man missed.

The readers of these new "Talks" may not agree with all the ideas that the book offers, but even so, it will probably have the effect of setting them to thinking in a way that will prove independently profitable. Ideas that produce ideas are worth noticing.

After the events narrated in the last chapter of the original book of "Talks," it was some weeks before Tobias Jenkins dropped into the store to stay for any length of time and John Barlow began to wonder whether he had not in

some way offended his old friend and predecessor. This however proved not to be the case as the old ways were soon resumed again with the results to be told in the chapters of this collection of " More Talks by the Old Storekeeper."

FRANK FARRINGTON.

FIRST TALK

THOSE MAIL ORDER HOUSES

The air was beginning to feel like fall and occasional dead leaves blew along the sidewalks one smoky afternoon as Tobias Jenkins came out of Charley Morrison's drug store and stood looking up at the yellow face of the sun.

" Dry, dry, dry. We can't stand much more of this weather or the farmers will have to buy bottled water for the stock," said he to himself. " It's going to be pretty tough on the merchants who have to carry the farmers on their books. Guess I'll go in and see how John's getting along. He ought to be getting ready for the fall trade now."

Walking slowly past the windows of Barlow's store he entered the door and strolled back between the counters toward the office of the proprietor who had a roll-top desk and a safe fenced off for his private use. Tobias hesitated at the ribbon case as he saw a brand new girl, a very

pretty and stylish looking girl, arranging the goods there.

She was a stranger to him and he realized that Barlow must have been importing help from some larger place. The old man appreciated a good looking girl and he knew to a fraction of a cent the value of such attractiveness in a store — if properly used. The girl looked up and said, "Good afternoon" but Tobias simply said, "I'm just a passenger" as he went on back to the office.

"Well, Mr. Jenkins, I thought you had deserted me," said John. "Sit down," and he shoved an arm chair toward the visitor.

"I've been staying away on purpose, John," said the newcomer. "I thought maybe it would be better if I didn't keep coming around and handing out advice all the while. Free advice is like free advertising, worth just about half what it costs."

"Not in your case, Mr. Jenkins. Your advice is worth a lot of money to me, or at least it would be if I would take a little more pains to follow it. I can see now where I have lost a good deal of business by thinking that I knew more about it than you do. What do you think of the outlook for rain? This drouth is getting to be a pretty serious thing with the farmers

and they aren't buying a thing they don't have to have."

"I think it looks just as much like rain now as it has any time in the last six weeks, and not a bit more. It's going to be up to you to work harder than ever this fall for what trade there is so as to make up for what there isn't. You'll have to get more of the other fellow's business and all the merchants ought to get together and try harder to bring business here that's going to other towns around and to those Chicago mail order houses."

"That's right," interrupted Barlow. "Those cussed mail order houses are what are raising the dickens. Every farmer around here has one of their eight day catalogs and reads it oftener than he does his Bible."

"Well, now, don't go up in the air about it, John. I'm no great friend of the mail order fellows that I know of. I don't buy my goods that way and I don't believe anybody can make any money doing it in the long run, but I can't see but that those fellows are doing business in a perfectly legitimate way. Of course you don't like their competition and I don't blame you, but it's fair, isn't it? They're getting trade because they most everlastingly go after it. They're hustlers after business. They don't spend any time

"Every farmer has one of their catalogs."

or energy sitting around kicking because the country merchant is getting some of the trade *they* want. No sir, they work overtime trying to figure out ways of making people send money to them instead of spending it at home."

"They do everybody they sell goods to," put in Barlow indignantly. "Why, look here, I know a man who just bought a suit of clothes from a Chicago house and when they came, the coat and pants didn't even match."

"Wouldn't they make it right?"

"Yes, of course they said they'd make it right, but what good would that do? The fellow wanted the clothes to wear."

"Oh well, I don't see that that's a very good argument in proof of the dishonesty of the mail order house though it's an argument in favor of buying where you can see what you're getting. When you come to think of it, the advantages are all in favor of the merchant who is right on the spot and if he loses trade to a merchant a thousand miles away, he really hasn't anyone to blame but himself."

Barlow seemed rather put out because of the older man's unsympathetic attitude but he refrained from the sacastic remark that was on the end of his tongue, and said,

"I don't believe, Mr. Jenkins, that when you ran this store the mail order houses were making the bid for trade that they are making now and perhaps you didn't go up against it in the way we have to nowadays."

"No, I didn't. You're right, but this mail order competition doesn't involve any spick and span new principle that I know of. Here's your store right here in Hampton with the goods in it and all the charges on them paid. A farmer comes in and wants a pair of overalls and a box of collars and a clothes line; maybe a lot more things. You can show him the goods. You can turn them right over to him if he likes them. There isn't any freight for him to pay. He doesn't have to wait for the stuff to come and take a chance of its turning out to be different from what he ordered or from what he thought it was going to be. You can probably even sell him the goods within a few cents of what he would pay in Chicago for a grade no better and very likely not quite as good. The advantage for the farmer is all in buying from you. You know a hundred reasons for that beside what I've mentioned. Why does Mr. Farmer send to Chicago at all?"

"Because he's a natural born darned fool and a cent looks bigger to him than a month of wait-

ing and a thousand chances of the goods being wrong."

"Not on your life!" ejaculated Tobias. "The farmer is no more a natural born darned fool than you are. He's willing to pay a fair price for what he buys. He's a business man nowadays and doesn't even look at affairs the way he used to years ago. I've done business with farmers ever since I've done business with anybody and I know what I'm talking about. They're the best customers I had when I ran the store. They're the backbone of the country to-day. They're the people who had money in the last panic when nobody else had a cent. They send to the mail order houses because the mail order houses keep asking them to send and showing them what they have to sell and how much it is to cost. The mail order house tells a good story. It describes its goods in the best way that printer's ink will do it; with pictures and word descriptions that make you want the goods. I know for I get the catalogs as regularly as they come out. I send for them because I want to see what's doing. You ought to do the same. If you knew your goods as well as the mail order man and described them as well to your customers, you would sell more of them. Every merchant ought to do all in

his power to keep posted on what his competitors are doing and these mail order competitors, according to your own story, are about your hottest and most lively ones."

"Well, I don't see where all that helps me any. I can't stop those houses from sending out their catalogs and keeping the farmers all stirred up, can I?"

"Why, John, you're not so blind as all that, are you? Can't you see any better way of getting under your competitor's belt? When Larry Benjamin over there gets out some extra hot advertising matter and springs a lot of bargains in your line on the public, you don't try to figure out how you can get him to stop his advertising, do you? Not by a jugful! You get busy on your own advertising and try to go him one better. Well, that's the only way to meet these other competitors. If it pays them, as far away as they are, to advertise to your customers, it sure ought to pay you right here on the spot to do it.

"You don't need to follow along the tracks of the mail order advertisers. You needn't pay any special attention to them unless you want to, but you ought to be firing out advertising to the farmers all the time. I say the farmers especially because they are the class who buy the

most goods from the mail order people. They seem to respond to the advertising better — and they would respond to your advertising better too."

"I've been advertising to the farmers all the time since I've been in business and it hasn't made me rich."

"It's paid you, hasn't it?"

"Well, I've been doing a good business and getting more of it all the time, so I suppose that or something else must have helped matters along."

"Of course. Your advertising all helps and your business is growing all the time but you might as well let it grow some faster. You aren't like old Josey Johnson, are you? Won't advertise because he's making a living out of his grocery store without advertising. It's all right to be satisfied with things as they are, but a little ambition is necessary if a man is going to get in sight of the top."

"I can't get out a big catalog like those mail order houses. I haven't the line and it wouldn't pay."

"No, of course not. It wouldn't pay you to get out a catalog of goods you haven't got and it wouldn't pay you to get in a big stock of goods just so you could catalog them. But what's to

hinder you from putting into your customer's hands two or three or four times a year a catalog of the goods you do have? I'd include too full instructions how to order them by mail if anyone wants to do it that way. It would pay you to do more of that kind of advertising."

"It would pay the printer better than it would pay me," said Barlow rather sourly. "I don't believe any retail store can buck this mail order proposition and make money at it."

"He can if he will try and I'll just bet you twenty-five dollars that if you will let me tell you what to do, you can make your business grow by following my advice. Here's a little dodge a fellow in Illinois worked the other day. He called a spade a spade and while I don't as a rule believe in saying anything about your competitor in advertisements, still this was so clever that in a catalog ridden town it might be pretty successful, especially as the point is well made. I'll just read you the contents of the advertisement the merchant sent out to his mailing list:

"'Our old friend, Montgomery Ward, of Chicago, sent us a nice big book yesterday, but as it came by freight and was left at the back door, we had not the opportunity to personally

thank him, and we now take this method of doing so. It seems as how Montgomery keeps a store down there, and this books tells how cheap he sells things. The book is also full of pictures of how a fellow would look dressed up in some of Montgomery's bargains. For example, we notice that he says he will sell an oiled Galloway coat for $21.75. Now, we believe he is honest in this, because we sell the same kind for $20.00. Not much difference in the price, but Montgomery is queer in some ways; he wants the money first. He says if you will send him $1.65 he will send you a 'pure wool' undershirt for it; that would be just like Montgomery — he would do it you bet — the same shirt would cost $1.50 here, pure, long wool, the 'Staley Make,' at that. And then he says he sells work shirts for thirty-six cents. Montgomery is a little high here, too — we sell them for thirty-five cents. He thinks it's better though, to buy the forty-three cent kind; of course, what he really means is, it's better for Montgomery — but he's so timid in saying so. Fleece lined underwear, the kind we sell for twenty-nine cents, Montgomery thinks are bargains at fifty cents. Montgomery is all right, and we thank him for the book. More new suits Saturday.'"

"I wouldn't advertise Montgomery Ward like

"How long have you been in the peach business?"

that," said Barlow. "I don't believe in that kind of advertising."

"I didn't say I did, did I?" said Tobias. "You didn't take up my bet and I'm not going to give you any real advice — yes, I am too. I'll tell you this much; if I were you I'd do as Charley Morrison told the man to do who hired out to cut his wood and then spent all his time standing around telling how many cords he'd cut in a day some other time and what a wonder he used to be. Charley got tired of all talk and no chop and told him to get busy and chop more wood with the axe and less with his mouth. I don't mean that you don't chop any wood. But about this mail order competition, I'd either get after the business in the right way or I'd stop kicking about the other fellows getting it."

Barlow took the advice in good spirit and admitted the force of it.

After discussing the matter for a while longer Tobias arose to go, saying as he got up,

"By the way, John, how long have you been in the peach business?"

Barlow looked blank for an instant until he saw the other man's glance travel toward the girl at the ribbon case. Then he turned red and sort of stammered,

"Why — er — that is, she is a saleslady I

hired when I was in New York the other day. Her name is Dolly Dingle. They told me that she could sell more goods than any other clerk in the store where she'd been working. She wanted to get out of the city on account of her mother's health, and I engaged her. Don't you think she'll make good?"

Tobias said nothing for a moment as he walked out of the office and just at the corner of the railing he turned and remarked in a dry tone,

"Yes, John, I'm inclined to think she'll make good. Probably it won't take her long either."

SECOND TALK

SOMETHING ABOUT CLERKS

For several days after Mr. Jenkins' last visit to Barlow's store he made it a point to drop in once or twice a day just to buy some little thing or other and get a line on how the new girl was getting on.

To tell the truth, he was afraid that she was almost too pretty and stylish to be a success in a store in a small town. In his mind he saw all sorts of unfortunate complications arising. He even told his wife that he never heard of a girl named Dolly amounting to anything as a worker and he didn't believe she would.

The first time or two that he went into the store Barlow was not there and one or two of the boys who should have been at work were standing around Dolly Dingle jollying her. Tobias noted that the girl herself kept busy and seemed not to pay very much attention to the boys, but nevertheless it seemed that she was already a disturbing element.

Then one day Mr. Jenkins went down town on an errand for his wife who wanted a piece of ribbon matched. He walked up to Miss Dingle's counter which was, strange to say, deserted by the men clerks just then, and showed her his sample and told what he wanted.

Well, he had expected to be treated in a sort of semi-snippy manner and perhaps made to feel that he had no business buying ribbon and taking up her valuable time. He had had such experiences before with salesladies.

He was agreeably surprised by the manner in which the girl greeted him. She was pleasant without overdoing it and she seemed to take a pleasure in making him feel at ease in buying goods that were a little out of the line of a man's ordinary purchases — and she was not chewing gum!

She took pains to show him all the different grades of goods and to explain their differences, and evidently she did not know that she was waiting upon an old merchant. In a word she did everything that a good clerk could do to please a customer.

Tobias went home with the ribbon and was so enthusiastic over "Barlow's Dolly Dingle," as he called her, that his wife took him to task for

it and continued to tease him for days afterward.

On his next call at the store Barlow himself was visiting with the attractive saleslady and when he saw Tobias coming in he looked up and turned just red enough so that the girl noticed it and elevated her head and turned her back to the men as she went about some work.

"I want to write a letter, John. Can I use your desk a few minutes?" Mr. Jenkins asked as he walked toward the office.

John assented cordially and followed along back and sat down in the old arm chair usually occupied by the old Storekeeper. While the other wrote, Barlow lighted a cigar and puffed away in silence, turning the leaves of a trade journal slowly.

At last the letter was finished and sealed into an envelope and Tobias swung around and said,

"How does the new clerk get on, John?"

John looked at his friend rather curiously out of the corner of his eyes but seeing no disposition to joke, he answered,

"Fine. I think she is all that was claimed for her. She knows her stock already and she sure is a wonder at showing goods."

"She waited on me a day or so ago," said

Tobias, " and I guess you're right. If she treats everybody as well as she did me, she will make customers for you right along. I'll admit I was a little afraid she would be too much devoted to the ways of the city trade to be of great value here where most of your trade is country people. She must be possessed of some tact. Tact is the one thing a good clerk has to have. Good salesmanship is to be able to please customers, and without tact it can't be done.

" If this girl fails to make money for you it will be your own fault. And the great danger is that she'll be spoiled by the men around the store and I don't except anybody when I say that. A mixed lot of clerks is all right and if handled right it makes a fine force, but if it isn't handled right there will be too much lovey dovey business and the men will be hanging over the counters talking to the girls and that will mean that the girls can't work if they want to and the men won't want to and the customers will find it lonesome waiting until conversations about ' last night ' are finished.

" The way to have your clerks right is to start 'em right. It's a good deal easier to lay down the rules and get them all clear in the clerk's mind right at first than it is to have to be correcting him every day afterward. And there are

a good many things that you can tell him at first without hurting his feelings, that maybe would seem pretty personal when they apply to faults that he proves to possess.

" I believe it's a good plan for every storekeeper to work out a set of rules that he finds will fit his store and keep them posted up where all his clerks will see them and read them. In this way he can keep reminding them of some of the points that he hates to be calling attention to every day. A man doesn't like to nag his clerks any more than they like to be nagged, but when they stick to the same old faults week after week, he can't let 'em go on without doing them and his business harm."

" That's so," assented Barlow. " Nagging certainly spoils the disposition of the nagger and the naggee. I've been there."

" The nagging isn't always done by the boss either," continued Tobias. " Some clerks seem to just delight in nagging their employers. They don't do it perhaps in the way that nagging is usually done, but they keep making the same mistake time after time, or they keep asking the same old questions about stock until the boss gets frazzled nerves answering them. Once ought to be enough for anybody to tell anybody else a simple fact. An ordinary brain ought to

grasp an ordinary order the first time it's told. The average clerk doesn't realize that he is owning up to a weak mind when he forgets and forgets and forgets until patience ceases to be a virtue.

" I've broken in a good many new clerks in my time and I've learned a thing or two in doing it. A clerk is the same kind of a fellow his boss is, or was. Human nature doesn't vary a whole lot whether it's a clerk or an employer. I can remember all about when I was a clerk and I have seen a good many storekeepers who either never were clerks or else couldn't remember anything about how it seemed. They seem to plumb forget all about how they felt when they were working for small wages.

" The Golden Rule is the only rule for any kind of business and for any part of the management of the business. When a man gets to where he can't treat his clerks and his customers in the way he'd like them to treat him, he'd better pull in his sign.

" I always knew what kind of things my clerks wanted to do to have a good time and I could appreciate how they felt about such things because I was always pretty fond of a good time myself. That made me willing to put myself out sometimes to accommodate the boys and that

in turn made them always ready to accommodate me. I never had a clerk who would get sore at having to work over-time or at not getting out when he asked to go. In the first place, it didn't often happen that I would have to refuse a man permission to get off. If I saw something coming that some of the boys would want to take in, I tried to arrange it to suit all hands as far as possible without waiting to be asked.

" The merchant who doesn't give anything more to his clerks than they insist on having will get out of them just about as much work as he insists upon their doing. Some men who go on the plan of ' Nothing for nothing and darned little for a dollar ' may be able to sell goods that way and hang on to some trade, but they won't very long hang onto any clerks who are any good and who can get anything else to do.

" It's pretty hard for the boss to realize that a new clerk doesn't know anything about the business. A fellow comes into the store who seems to be a nice young chap and has an ordinary amount of intelligence and the boss maybe has known him off and on for years. Well, this chap has never worked in a store before and doesn't even know how to make change and do it right. He begins it at the wrong end and he does pretty nearly everything wrong end first.

"I tried to arrange it to suit all hands."

"It's aggravating; no doubt about it. Sales are lost and customers are disgruntled and the cash is short and all sorts of accidents happen. If they all happened at once the boss would go crazy, but that's the compensating thing about life anyway, troubles come only a day at a time, and that's plenty as a rule.

"The new clerk is generally trying his best and it's like the sign in that wild west 'Beer garden' that reads, 'Don't shoot the pianist, he's doing his best.' The right kind of a boss remembers that he was once a greenhorn himself and he thinks of the time when he didn't know a sales slip from a government bond. He uses a little patience, and the clerk comes out all right. After all patience is all that's necessary with green clerks. They'll learn fast enough if they have a chance. They don't like it any better than the boss does to have customers come in and make fools of them.

"Why, a clerk I had once made a mistake he didn't get over blushing about for a week. A woman came in and asked for a pad. They wore hip pads a good deal in those days — maybe they do yet for all I know — and John thought of those first. He got some out and laid them down before the customer and she very coldly informed him that she wished a writing tab-

let, not one of those 'trumpery things.' I believe that's what she called them."

Barlow laughed a little over this and added that it reminded him of the man who came into Morrison's drug store a few days before and wanted to get a medicine dropper.

"He was an intelligent looking chap," said Barlow, "but he was as ignorant as your clerk. He asked for a 'drooper.'"

"Yes," said Tobias, "the clerks aren't always to blame for the mistakes that are made. When you see the way that people ask for things and the way they mix up the names of goods, it's funny there aren't more mistakes made.

"I always used to tell my clerks to be patient with customers who asked for things they'd never heard of. Never give up, I'd tell them, until you have found out what the customer really wants. Don't turn anybody off with a careless 'We haven't got it,' just because you don't know what they're driving at.

"When one clerk didn't know what the customer meant, I'd have him say 'I'm not sure whether we have that or not, I'll see.' Then he'd come and tell me or a more experienced clerk that he couldn't make out what his customer wanted and that clerk would come along and say, 'Is anyone waiting upon you? Yes,

what was it you wanted?' etc. It's easy enough to give the other clerks a chance and two heads are better than one any old day. And no clerk has any business to laugh at the mistakes of the customers.

"The Irish woman who came into Morrison's one day when I was in there and asked for a comb had just as good money as anyone. 'Give me a comb,' said she. 'Do you want a fine tooth comb?' asked Charley. 'No, I want it for me hair,' said she. Charley never turned a hair but handed out what she wanted and laughed after she'd gone out.

"I used to have a little scheme that helped to make good clerks and it pleased the clerks too. I never raised a clerk's pay until he had been in the store a year. At the end of the year I got up a little examination for him to try. It was a number of questions about handling customers and about all kinds of work he had to do. The questions were laid out with a view to covering the weak points that he showed.

"I told him that with a year of experience he ought to be worth more money than he was at first and that I was willing to give him more if he was worth it. I told him that of course I had my own opinion in the matter but that I wanted him to try a little examination and if

everything was satisfactory he would get a raise. Of course if he was a poor clerk and wasn't worth a raise I let him go without any further fuss because a clerk who hasn't improved enough in a year to be worth a raise isn't very blamed valuable to the store.

"I never did believe in making a clerk ask for every raise he got and then giving it to him only when he threatened to leave if I didn't. A fellow appreciates a raise in pay more when it comes without being asked for, and if the boss only gives a raise when it's demanded, his clerks are likely to get an idea that asking for it is what gets it and they will all be asking every pay day.

"Another thing I found out about my help, and that was that while there might be an apparent limit to what I could afford to pay a man, there never was any actual limit. I never had a clerk, no matter what I paid him, to whom I wouldn't pay more if he could keep making himself worth more money. The clerk who gets to be high man may think he has reached the limit of salary in his present position, but let him show that he could increase his money making power and he would get a raise in salary.

"Talking about green clerks, and by that I

mean clerks that haven't ever clerked it anywhere, I'm on their side. For quite a while they're like fish out of water. Even the fellow who is just a natural born salesman takes sometime to get his bearing and feel at home in a store. It looks easy to go behind the counter and hand out the goods and put the money in the money drawer, but I tell you many a fellow has found that he couldn't do it right, even after he had been shown how. It's more than one of these simple stunts that are easy for anyone after they are explained.

"You've got a pretty good force here now, John, haven't you? Who's the good looking fellow that seems to hang around Dolly Dingle a good deal? I notice they always go to dinner at the same time."

"Oh, that's Jerry Barnard. You know Jerry. Miss Dingle won't find him very entertaining."

Tobias said nothing at this but it is safe to say that he made a mental reservation. Barlow was a little conceited when it came to the girl question and he evidently thought that he was the only one in the store who could suitably entertain Dolly Dingle.

What Dolly's thoughts in the matter were was not to be found out easily for girls have a way of keeping certain thoughts to themselves in spite

of their general reputation for never keeping a secret.

Tobias noticed that Barlow followed him out as far as the ribbon counter where he stopped with the pretty salesgirl and apparently took up his conversation right where he had left off to go back to the office with his visitor. This little incident had a tendency to make the Old Storekeeper feel that perhaps his visit had been an interruption and he thought it very likely that he might not come in again for some time.

THIRD TALK

HOW RETAIL ADVERTISING PAYS

Henry Foss ran the only real tobacco store in Hampton and while he made money and lived comfortably he felt that there was no reason why he should not make more money. He knew that there was more business he might have if he could devise some way of getting it.

He thought over the advertising ideas that came to his mind but he had never done much advertising and he felt a little doubtful of its value to him. He was in the same position as most merchants are who have not given advertising a trial. He thought his business was different from everybody else's and that while the grocer and the druggist and the dry goods merchant might make it pay well to advertise he doubted if he could.

At last he decided to ask Tobias Jenkins what he thought about it. He called the Old Storekeeper in one day as he was passing and giving him a comfortable chair and a good cigar he told

him he wanted his opinion about advertising his business.

"Do you want to know what I think about your doing some advertising, Henry?" asked Tobias.

"Yes sir, I want your advice about it."

"Well, I'll tell you what I think but I give you the privilege of doing just as you've a mind to about it because I know that my advice doesn't get followed very often and you won't need to make any apologies for not following it.

"There isn't a shadow of doubt in my mind that you can make your business grow just as sure by advertising as you could if you were selling dry goods. Anything that people want to buy can be sold with good advertising. All that advertising is is making people want the goods and showing them where they can buy them. A lot of people want your kind of goods already but are buying them here and there wherever it happens because they don't know that they can buy them to any better advantage from you than anywhere else.

"The same rules that apply to any kind of retail advertising apply to yours and I'm going to give you a little information along that line and let you think on it a little and then per-

haps some other day I'll come in and be more explicit. I don't want to tell you so much at one time that you won't want to ever see me again.

"One of the first things you want to understand about advertising your business is that there's no use in advertising a little now and then. These little spurts of advertising that some fellows pull off don't do much except put their money in circulation. You know how it is when you start out to row a boat up the river against a pretty good current? Well, getting business by advertising isn't so very different from that. You can set out and row like Sam Hill for a few minutes and shoot along pretty good and then you stop and rest and back you go to where you started from and if you don't get busy pretty quick you go back down stream below where you started. Then you get at the oars and pull away for a little while again and get about as far as you did the first time and have to rest and float back down once more, and as long as you keep at it that way you'll just put in your time going up and down right in front of your own dock maybe. If you'd started out kind of easy when you first got into the boat and kept a steady pulling just hard enough so that it kept you moving up stream

and not hard enough so that you had to stop and rest, then you would have been away up and around the bend of the river by now.

"Well, that's the way advertising works. You've got to keep grinding away at it steady as a clock. When you think you have the business coming your way and begin to economize on your advertising bills, then you begin to float back down again.

"No end of merchants start in good and strong and stop for all kinds of reasons. Some get cold feet and think their advertising bills are too big and because nobody is coming in and saying 'I came to buy this because I saw your advertisement,' they don't see that the advertising is paying them. Some are just naturally quitters and can't keep at anything long enough to succeed. And some don't know how to advertise. It doesn't make but mighty little difference why a man quits as long as he does quit.

"In the first place advertising doesn't very often produce direct, right away results that are big enough to pay for it. I never in my life ran a newspaper advertisement that I got enough sales from that I knew came from it to pay for it. But I never did spend so much money on a year's advertising that I couldn't see where the business had grown more than enough to

pay the extra advertising bill out of the extra profits.

"If you go to advertising you might as well make up your mind that you won't have enough people come in and say 'I'll take a box of those Royal King cigars you advertised the other day' to pay for the advertisement. They won't come.

"But if the advertising is any good it will bring business and you will be able to see the difference from month to month — after you've been at it long enough to begin to make an impression on people. There will be a gain that you can't lay to anything unless it is the advertising. You can't see the hands of the watch move but look at them now and then again ten minutes from now!

"Good, classy advertising of the steady, never let up sort has got to win. It isn't the fisherman that goes thrashing along and fishes the whole length of the stream in an afternoon that gets the most fish. Not by a jugful! It's the quiet chap that finds a likely hole and camps right out beside it and stays till he gets his fish. And more than this, the careful fisherman doesn't get discouraged because Mister Fish doesn't snap the hook right off on the first cast. No sir. He tries his bait and he tries his flies and he changes his position and his tackle until he

hits it right. If the business doesn't respond to the advertising, change the advertising. Don't lay it to the people if your bait doesn't tempt them. They've got a right to want the kind of cigars or the kind of tobacco that they want. No use getting sore because they prefer some kind you haven't got. Get it.

"One thing is sure. When your business begins to get sick and need advertising, see that it has it and don't stop short of getting the best you can afford. When you get a toothache don't you go to the dentist and don't you tell him 'Go ahead, Doc. Get her out and do it quick!' No haggling over the price then.

"It's the same with your business when it gets sick. Dicker all you want to after you get it on its feet, if that's your way, but for heaven's sake until then, give it the best doctor and the best medicine you can find.

"The fact that you called me in here and asked me what I think about your advertising shows that you've got an idea it would pay. You're probably willing to try it, but you want to be willing to try it a good while. I've known men who advertised a week, others that advertised a month and some who advertised six months and got discouraged in spite of the fact that business was getting better. You aren't

that kind of a chap I know because I've seen you sticking here when business was mighty slow coming and when I didn't see how you could be making it pay. But you've stayed till it does pay and that shows you aren't afraid to work hard and take a chance. I don't mean that it's like taking a chance to advertise. It isn't like buying a ticket in a lottery and waiting to see if you've happened to draw a prize. It's like buying a bond or a mortgage and then waiting for the interest to come due. Advertising is an investment. If it wasn't, do you suppose you'd see all those pages in the magazines full of advertisements? Different? Not a bit. The advertisers in those magazines are sticking right there and hollering at you for business every time just the same as you've got to stick in your newspaper and holler at folks to come and buy from you. People won't hear you if you stop hollering and a good many won't hear you till you've hollered quite a good many times. Folks are amazingly deaf when you're talking to 'em about spending their money.

"You perhaps don't know much about how to advertise. I don't believe you've ever had any experience in doing it. Well, you can't expect that you can pick it up like picking up a match to light a cigar.

" People don't pick up plumbing, or cigar making or watch making that way. I don't mean to say that for you to learn to write your own advertisements would be as hard as for you to learn either of those other jobs. But all the same writing advertising isn't the cinch a lot of people think it. If you find when you come to try it that you can't write good stuff, you'd better get somebody who can to write it for you and pay 'em for the work — for a while anyway until you get the hang of it from watching them do it.

" Of course the way to learn to advertise is to study advertising just as that's the way to learn anything. And the fellows who know the most about that or anything else are the fellows who study it the most. It's practice that makes perfect. The fellow who keeps working at advertisement writing keeps learning something all the time, especially if he keeps studying the advertising of other fellows he knows have made a success of it.

" Why, when I started in advertising my store, I used to take a newspaper from the city just to study the ads in it and I'd clip out all the good advertisements I saw and write some for myself almost like them, just changing the reading enough to make it fit my store and my goods. I

found after I'd been copying other fellows' advertisements that way for a while that I could sit down and write off a pretty good imitation of their ads myself.

" Of course a fellow's got to begin at the beginning to learn advertising or arithmetic or anything. He ought to know something about type. You ought to go right to the printer who's going to print your advertising and tell him how much space you can afford to use and get him to give you a sample sheet or paper with the names written on opposite the kinds of type he's got in his shop. Then you can look them over and pick out the kind you think will look the best and most attractive in your space and use it right along all the time. You want a type that will stand out and make people take notice and you want one that will not be like those in the surrounding ads. The printer will tell you anything you want to know along that line. He'll probably think he knows a good deal more about it than you do and he may laugh at the suggestions you make to him, but when you get a good idea from somewhere else, you use it and let the printer laugh if he wants to.

" The policy of a store is pretty important and I'd advise you to advertise your policy. You want satisfied customers and the way to make

them satisfied is to sell them good goods and when they think the goods aren't all that they ought to be, to give them back their money.

"It's all right to do business that way and just doing it will make friends and business for the store, but to advertise it will make more business. It will bring in people who haven't had satisfaction in other stores. When a man who has just made some unsatisfactory purchases at your competitor's store sees your advertisement saying, 'We want satisfied customers. If you buy anything from us that does not turn out just as we said it would, we are willing to give you back your money if you will ask for it,' then that fellow is pretty likely to be influenced by the statement and you will see him drop in and buy something and he'll keep on coming as long as everything is all right. As like as not he'll have a chip on his shoulder and be waiting for a chance to see whether you make good on your promise or not. Of course you don't want to advertise anything of that sort unless you are prepared to do as you agree.

"Let me tell you about one kind of advertising you never ought to do. That's this negative sort that tells the people the things you don't do. Haven't you seen lots of ads that read 'We don't sell trust goods' or we 'don't carry

anything but the best so-and-so'? Well, the moral is that your customers, some of them want cheap goods or trust brands and you are going out of your way to tell them you don't carry what they want to buy. There may be some folks who will like a store better if it does not handle a trust article. If you have such customers, whisper the information to them if you think they need it, but don't hand it out to the general public in a way that will get you in bad with somebody.

"Remember one thing and that is that you've got to tell the truth in your advertising, even more than you have to tell it behind the counter. When you lie to a man once in your advertising, you make him doubt every advertisement you put before him afterwards. A store has got to have the confidence of the people no matter what it sells. And if the advertising is to bring in any business that advertising must have the confidence of the people too. When you tell the reader of your advertisement that you are offering a certain article at a price that is a bargain, it's up to you to make it a bargain. When you say 'Sterling' see that it is sterling.

"The best advertising for you to do unless you are the little dealer in the big city, is local newspaper advertising. You can buy a space in our

Hampton paper, maybe five inches double column, and it will very likely cost you a dollar an issue and it will reach some 4,000 readers. You can't get to 4,000 people in any other way for a dollar. Of course you are paying for some waste circulation because some subscribers are too far away to trade with you, but even at that, you are getting to your possible customers the cheapest way.

"The kind of advertisements I like best to read are the ones that talk right to me instead of kind o' beating about the bush. I like good straight facts and figures that tell me what I want to know about what I want to buy. No use in filling an ad up with a lot of fancy talk any more than there's any use in filling it up with a lot of fancy figures and printer's doodads. When people are thinking of spending their money they are thinking hard and close to the main point. These Fourth of July oration kinds of advertisments don't get me coming to a store.

"Your advertising ought to tell people about the new things, the things they are going to buy soon, instead of about the things they bought last week. I mean by that that the advertising ought not to trail along behind the demand. For instance, a big newspaper campaign or magazine campaign is opened up by the manufacturer of

some brand that you take on. You want to be telling your customers that you have the goods and getting them interested before they begin asking for them instead of after the demand begins. In this way you get them to come to you the first time. Then they keep coming.

"You want to make your advertising bring in business for the dull days and if you are going to offer some pretty good specials it's a mighty good plan to use 'em to brace up the days that wouldn't pay expenses if you didn't start something. Why, in the general merchandise business it used to be that there were one or two days in the week when nobody ever thought of coming in to buy anything and there were about four months in the year when business stood still and went fast asleep. That's all changed now. There's business every day and business every month and advertising is what did the trick. There's nothing like it to start something.

"Well, I've got to go in and bother Barlow a little while now and see how his affairs are coming on. I'll be in and see you again when I find out how you've stood this dose. So long."

"There used to be months when business stood and went fast asleep."

FOURTH TALK

THE CLOTHES YOU WEAR

Hampton was not a large town and you know how it is in these country towns when a new girl arrives, whether she is to work in one of the stores or visit the head of the village Smart Set. All the boys at once begin to try to get her to notice them.

Dolly Dingle was a marvel at minding her own business. She was in every respect a "peach" and the young fellow who wanted her to go anywhere with him had to come right up to the mark and ask her in the way a gentleman should. There was no hanging around the street and catching on as she went by. She never seemed to see the chap who was waiting for just that slightly encouraging smile that would give him the courage to come with her.

And this attitude came pretty near being the right way to treat the boys who seemed to think that all they had to do to get a girl was to give her a chance to go to an oyster supper with them.

But there was one man whom Dolly went with oftener than with any other and strange to say he was the head clerk in Larry Benjamin's, and Larry Benjamin, as everybody knew, was the only merchant in Hampton who came anywhere near worrying Barlow with his competition.

As Tobias walked slowly downtown one evening just after supper enjoying the first cigar he had smoked that day, he saw Jack Henderson, Larry Benjamin's head clerk, starting out in the best rubber tired runabout the village livery afforded, and Dolly Dingle by his side.

"Guess I'll drop in and see how Barlow is taking it," the old merchant said to himself.

As he entered the store and walked back to the office he saw that the proprietor was buried in his books but did not seem to be doing anything. Ledger and journal were open and pen was in his hand but he was not turning over the pages or using the pen. He did not even hear Tobias coming.

The latter pulled a chair inside the railing after him and as Barlow finally looked up with a semi-scowl, he said,

"Pretty tough, ain't it?"

"What are you talking about?" asked Barlow.

"I was just sort o' thinking out loud. I meant

that it's tough to have to work for a living when everybody else seems to be having a good time."

"Humph!" ejaculated the younger man and went at his books.

Tobias made no further remarks but puffed away contentedly at his cigar meanwhile looking Barlow over rather critically. At last the cigar became too short to smoke and he threw it away, asking,

"Been working in the cellar this afternoon?"

"No," answered Barlow crossly. "What the dickens made you think that?"

"Your clothes," said Tobias calmly.

"Well, what's the matter with these clothes? Haven't I got to wear my old clothes when I'm at work?"

"Oh yes, of course, and the older they are, the better you'll work, I suppose. Now for instance, take the work that you do here in the store. You wait on customers a good deal and you keep the books and do quite a lot of jobs like that that call for overalls and a jumper and naturally you ought to wear 'em. I was kind o' surprised to see you without 'em on to protect that good old suit, that's all. I was in Larry Benjamin's the other day and a fellow came out and waited on me and he had nice clothes on, all pressed up so the creases showed and darned

if he didn't make me think I was doing business in a pretty classy store — and you know what Larry Benjamin's is like? It ain't so much. But I'll bet that fellow will spoil that suit, or wear it out or something. Of course it didn't probably cost more than $15, but a man ought to be careful about his clothes and make 'em last. You see, if they last long enough he'll never have to buy any more."

"Go as far as you like," said Barlow. "Have all the fun with me you want to. You must think clothes grow on bushes."

"That suit you've got on looks as if it grew on a bush and one that was pretty far out in the woods at that."

For some time nothing more was said. There was no sound but that of the suspiciously industrious pen scratching rapidly along. At last Barlow threw down the pen, swung around and took out a cigar and handed it to Tobias and then lit one for himself.

"Now," said he, "what about this clothes thing? I'll be the goat. Aren't these clothes all right for work?"

"Yes, for some kinds," said Tobias. "But I'll tell you what, I like to see the proprietor of a store looking as if he was making money. I like to see him look like a modern business man,

not like a plumber's assistant on his job. Probably there was a time when people went into a store expecting to see the merchant looking like a hired man at milking time but there have been just as many improvements in some things as there have been in others. All the improvements in storekeeping haven't been in dressing up the store. Part of them have been in dressing up the help and the boss.

"When we can put in fixtures that make it possible to handle the dirty kinds of goods in a white duck suit and not spot it, we make it possible for the fellows behind the counter to look a little more inviting. Nobody prefers to do business with a man in a dirty collar or ragged clothes.

"Most of your customers are women and they are in the habit of apologizing when anybody comes into their homes and catches them in an old wrapper. They don't think it's very good housekeeping to be around in an unattractive costume at the hours when people are liable to drop in.

"They are pretty apt to apply their logic to storekeepers. And more than that, the fellow that is just downright unattractive to look at by reason of dirt and holes won't make the women want to come any oftener than is necessary. Of

course you think you are economizing and you're a little sore because I say anything about it and you're a little more sore because that chap over at Larry Benjamin's has gone out riding with your Miss Dingle. No explanations necessary," as Barlow started to speak. "I can see as far through a stonewall as the next man.

"But, say, if you wear that kind of clothes around all the time, you can't blame a girl like Dolly Dingle, excuse me, Miss Dingle, from taking up a little with a classy dresser like Jack Henderson. There sure is a fellow that knows how to wear his clothes and when to wear 'em too, for I'll bet that when he's at work on a dirty job he knows enough to put on the clothes for it, but he doesn't regard selling goods as a dirty job, and a job is pretty apt to be about what we call it at that.

"Pretty near the most important thing though about this clothes business for you is the fact that the boss of the store, if he wears sloppy clothes, is just dead sure to find in a little while that his clerks are getting to wearing them. Now how can you expect the boys to think it's worth while to dress up on ten or twelve per when the boss doesn't do it on whatever he is making out of the whole shooting match?

"There's little Nick Blish that was the most

finicky kid in the high school the teachers tell me and now since he's been working here he's got so he doesn't polish his shoes except on Sundays and his collar, I noticed as I came in, looks like he belonged to the anti-laundry league.

"Of course the boys brushed up a little when Miss Dingle came and some of them will probably keep it up. You started in pretty well yourself, but here you are again! Darned if I don't sometimes think that a girl will do a man more harm by not paying much attention to him than she will do him good by being his sure enough Honey.

"If I was in business and just about on the ragged edge and afraid the sheriff would step in next week, do you know what I'd do to stand off his coming and straighten things out so that people would think everything was coming my way and so they would come my way?"

"I'm no mind reader," said Barlow a little dryly.

"Well, you'd make money by learning to be. I'd go right out and buy a new suit of clothes the first thing, if I had to use my last dollar in cash to get possession of them, and I'd rig myself up so that I'd look like old Mr. Prosperity himself. And I wouldn't hide my light under a bushel either. I'd get out and hustle around

town from one place to another on business and give everyone a chance to see those new clothes right away. And that little scheme with some others would make an impression I'll bet.

"People like to do business with a man who is prosperous and they like to trade in a prosperous store. Trade follows the crowd. You can't make a store look prosperous when the people who run it look like last year's birds' nests. You know the saying, 'There aren't any birds in last year's nest'? It's so near true that nobody disputes it."

Tobias waited for Barlow to speak.

"You are a good deal older than I, Mr. Jenkins, and I guess you are pretty near right when it comes to points about storekeeping, but I've been right here in Hampton long enough to be able to point out to you quite a bunch of fellows who have started in as swell dressers and finished as tin horn gamblers and paper sports. It seems to me that a man might a good deal better keep his swell dressing until he has the price to do it on his own money."

The Old Storekeeper could not but acknowledge the force of this argument and he said,

"Of course, of course. But just because one girl plays the piano till she wears the first joints off from all of her fingers you wouldn't say that

nobody ought to play the piano. A man's a fool to go to the extreme in anything and if he hasn't got sense enough to keep down to proper limits in dressing or in smoking or in advertising or anything else, he'd better go wrong on the side of under-doing it rather than overdoing it.

"You remember old Major Anderson? They used to call him 'Superinduce Anderson.' Well, he was strong for the long words. Instead of throwing one in once in a while where it belonged, he insisted on tangling up everything he said with language that seemed to be troubled with too much upper story. He used to take care of the rector's garden and one day he rushed into the house where the rector's wife was at work and exclaimed 'Madam the male hen has escaped the paling and is now roaming at large in the horticultural enclosure.' 'What, Major,' the lady said, 'is the rooster out?' 'That, Madam, is the intelligence I intended to convey.'

"Now you see, don't you, that just as soon as a fellow goes to an extreme he makes himself ridiculous. I don't believe in a fellow making himself ridiculous or making himself a fop or making a clothes-horse of himself any more than you do, but I don't believe either in his spending all his life in fear that he will offend one of his

"A man's a fool to go to the extreme in dressing."

creditors by wearing better clothes than that fellow does.

"When a man comes in here and wants credit for some household goods, are you more apt to trust him if he wears good clothes or if he is the walking image of the farmer's crow chaser? You can tell whether he is a well dressed man or a pin-head in a new suit of ten-ninety-eight clothes that he saved money for by going without underwear all summer."

"You sort of think then that I ought to turn over a new leaf?" asked Barlow.

"Well," continued Tobias, "it wouldn't do you a bit of harm to take the matter under consideration. 'Spruce up' is a pretty darned good motto for any man, no matter how careful he is. There is always a little chance for improvement and I'll say this much, that whatever difference it may make with business to wear better looking clothes and to look as if you were making something more than enough to pay the interest on your debts, there isn't any doubt in my mind that Miss Dolly Dingle will be a good deal more proud to be seen walking downtown with you if you look like the proprietor than she will if you look like the janitor or the chore-boy.

"It won't be so easy for you to get the clerks back to dressing neatly as it will be to get your-

self so. In time they would notice the difference and be effected by it, but you know it's always a lot easier to influence people for wrong than it is to influence them for right. You can pull a man down hill easier than you can push him up.

"If I were you I'd take the bull right by the horns and save any delay and at the same time make it easier to mention. A fellow hates to be all the time calling a clerk's attention to his clothes, but if you call the boys together any night after closing up and say 'Fellows, I'm going to turn over a new leaf. You've probably noticed that I've been going around looking pretty sloppy lately and I'm going to put on my best suit of clothes and polish my shoes every day and see that my collars and cuffs are always clean and I want to know how many of you will join me in this.' I'll bet the boys will all be right with you."

Barlow made a rather wry face as Tobias thus indirectly accused him of being unpleasantly untidy, but at last he smiled and accepted the advice with good grace. That is the secret of the success of a good many men; they had the ability to take advice.

Every man can give advice and most of us like to do it, but not one in a thousand can take

it and profit by it. But that one goes a long way.

John Barlow was not a remarkable fellow in most ways and he did not like to have his faults brought to his attention much better than you or I may like it, but he had grown used to Tobias' ways and the older man had made his advice valuable and almost necessary to the younger. John was wise enough to realize that however bad the medicine might taste at times, it certainly did him good and when he took it it always proved to be the right thing, and when he did not take it the result generally showed to his disadvantage.

The business on this particular evening amounted to very little as no one seemed to be out shopping and there had been no call for Barlow in the front as he sat and listened to Tobias. At last however there came a little rush and the merchant had to excuse himself and Tobias could not help but notice that he glanced rather uneasily at himself in the mirror as he started for the front of the store.

The older man smiled a little to himself as he got up and re-lit his cigar and wandered toward the front door. He stood outside in the doorway for some time and at last closing time came and he heard Barlow inside asking the boys if

they would mind staying five minutes as he wanted to talk to them a little about something that he had on his mind.

As he heard this, Tobias smiled again and sat down on the front steps to wait for Barlow.

After about fifteen minutes the clerks came out and went home and right after them came their employer. Tobias got up and said,

"I heard you ask one of the boys to stay and I had some curiosity to know what they would say. Did they take up with your suggestion?"

"Yes, they all agreed that they might improve upon their appearance without much trouble. They admitted that I had been looking pretty tacky, too, lately and that didn't help my pride any, but you didn't leave me much of that when you got through so I didn't feel sore about it at all. I thought that I might as well take your advice right away because if there is any advantage in looking better I might as well begin to get it to-morrow as to wait a week or a month."

They were walking leisurely up the street and at this juncture Tobias turned his corner remarking, "And then, the sooner you look better, the sooner Dolly Dingle will be proud to walk down the street with you instead of with Jack Henderson."

Barlow made no response to this and the absence of any denial may have meant assent or not. In either case Tobias would not have changed his opinion.

FIFTH TALK

HANDLING THE MONEY

In the village of Hampton most of the stores kept open for a little while on the forenoon of a holiday like Thanksgiving day but closed up at noon or a little before for the rest of the day.

Barlow had told the clerks that they need none of them work on this day and he himself had only gone down and opened the store at about nine o'clock in order that he might be there to accommodate any stray customer who perhaps was really in need of something in the line.

It was about eleven o'clock and he was just thinking about locking the door and going home when the Old Storekeeper wandered in as if looking for a place to loaf for a little while and Barlow took advantage of the situation to talk to him.

"Mr. Jenkins," said he, "I haven't a thing to do or a place to go till dinner-time. Come on back and let's have a visit."

"I guess you know, son, that when you say 'visit' to me, you strike right into my long suit," said Tobias. "I'm the champion long distance visitor of this little berg all right. My family is getting the Thanksgiving dinner ready and they don't want me around home so I'm sort of on the town for a while."

"My case exactly," said Barlow. "My mother doesn't need any of my help in getting up a dinner and there isn't a thing to do outside on a raw day like this. Beside I want to talk to you about something that is pretty important to me. I'm trying to make up my mind to put in some new kind of a system of handling the store money and I can't decide what to do. What would you do?"

"Well now," Tobias answered, "that's a pretty flat question. I don't know as I want to stand or fall on a single answer recommending some kind of a plan. It's a good deal like asking a man if he's stopped beating his wife and making him answer yes or no. If I tell you what kind of a cash handling system to use and it falls down, then I lose my reputation, and if it makes good, you think it's because you handle it so well. I can't win any way you work it. Ask me something easier."

Barlow insisted however that he was in earn-

est and that he wanted the advice of Tobias and that he would not hold him responsible in any event.

"What's the matter with the old money drawer?" asked the Old Storekeeper finally. "I always used one and I made quite a little money, didn't I? Aren't you getting a little highfalutin'?"

There was an almost imperceptible smile around his eyes as he put this question. Tobias was evidently disposed to try out the younger man and see what made him want a different cash system.

Barlow responded with queries of his own.

"You always used folded wrapping paper and you sold all your crackers out of a barrel and you went home to see what your wife wanted instead of telephoning, too, didn't you? Is that a sign that roll wrapping paper isn't a convenience, that package crackers aren't easier to handle, and that it isn't a good deal quicker to telephone than to walk?"

"In other words, just because I was old fashioned enough to use an open and shut money drawer it isn't any sign that better ways haven't been invented since? Is that the idea?"

Barlow nodded with a grin. "That's about it," said he.

"Well, John, I guess you're right. It wasn't old fashioned though in those days to put your money into a sliding box that had a bunch of keys under it that were supposed to make it hard to open. It was the best thing yet invented. But I don't believe in standing still and I must confess that I have sometimes wondered why you haven't been looking after the money end as well as the other parts of the business.

"I just believe that there's a whole lot of money goes wrong or doesn't go at all in handling the business of a store. It stands to reason that everybody connected with the store is going to forget once in a while, and as far as I've noticed nobody ever forgets so that the store makes more money by it. Every time anybody forgets it takes something out of the profits.

"Now, I'm just as careful as anybody. When I was running this store I was right on the job every minute and I'll be darned if there weren't one or two men who were always telling me, when they settled their bills, about something they'd bought that I hadn't charged. You know how it is. There are customers who always seem to get in on all the mistakes you make. If the goods are delivered wrong, they're the ones who don't get their order. If the new brand you've guaranteed falls down with anybody it

falls down with them. If there is an overcharge, or a shortage of goods, they get it. Well, I can remember three customers at least who were always finding something wrong with their bills and quite often it was that they'd had goods that weren't on the bill. That shows they were honest people anyway, but it doesn't show that I never forgot to charge things that other families bought. If I forgot for one, I had the same chance of forgetting for all and I did it too. And if I did it, anxious as I was to get the money, you can bet that the boys did it.

"And I made other mistakes. I made mistakes in giving folks too much change. Sometimes they told me but I am sure that sometimes they didn't. I took out money to buy things for myself and didn't set it down. Of course it was all my money, but then if a man's going to know what his business is doing, he doesn't want money going out or coming in that isn't set down — and he doesn't want any going out that he doesn't know about. You've had a little experience of that sort yourself and you know that there are such things as dishonest clerks."

"Yes," said Barlow. "That was certainly a surprise to me to know that that boy would take my money."

"Well, it needn't have been a surprise to you to find out that if you left your money lying around loose somebody would take it. I believe in the honesty of the average man all right. I'm no pessimist, but I know mighty well that it's temptation that makes folks go wrong and it stands to reason that the oftener and the more they're tempted, the oftener and the more they'll go wrong.

"Now I'm going to say something that you won't agree with me in. I'm going to say that when you keep the store cash in a common money drawer that can be opened by any clerk in the store, you are leaving your money around loose during business hours just the same as if you piled it on a shelf back of the counter."

"Oh, I don't think that at all," said Barlow.

"Of course you don't. If you did you wouldn't do it, and anyway I said you wouldn't agree with me. But look here! You people here take in money and put it into a drawer without any record of it at all except the money itself. Think of the things you don't know — or probably it would be easier to count up the little you do know. All you know is that when you count up the money it comes to so much. You don't know what mistakes have been made, how much money has not been put in, how much

has been taken out, how many people have been given too much or too little change. You don't know a darned thing that you ought to know in order to keep careful track of your business.

"I haven't anything to say about the possible dishonesty of your clerks. Pretty nearly every man has at least one dishonest hair in his head. I have some and you have some. We all have. The public in general doesn't find out about it. You won't show me yours and I won't show you mine, but they're there. You found that out when you thought every clerk in your store was honest as the day was long while there was one who was putting your profits into his pocket. Most of us can keep our inclination to dishonesty under control, but the oftener we're tempted to let it go, the more likely we are to do it. You've got a good lot of boys here in the store — oh yes, and one girl too. I nearly forgot. I wouldn't think of accusing any of them of dishonesty any more than you ought to think of tempting them to be dishonest.

"But there are things to consider in handling your money besides the mere possibility of some of it being stolen. If we're going to talk about what kind of a cash system is the best for you to use, we might as well go about it in a logical kind of way and consider a little.

"The old wooden money drawer with the joke-lock on it you admit isn't good enough for you. You admit that it doesn't deliver the goods it's supposed to deliver, for divers and sundry reasons. Now the question is what will deliver the money and deliver it all and in addition show you all about where you got it, who took it in and so on?"

"I'd thought," said Barlow, "that one of these filing cases with every credit customer having a separate space and carbon copies of everything made at the time of the sale would be a pretty good thing for my credit sales."

"I'll tell you one thing," said Tobias. "If you mean one of these schemes that leaves at my house with every lot of goods a dirty little yellow sheet of paper with a black back to it that gets my hands all black every time I touch it, count me off your credit list. I'll pay cash first. Why one merchant in this town that we buy provisions from leaves one of those things with every lot of goods and then the first of the month he comes around with another little black-backed sheet that says on it, $4.56, or some other amount and that's practically all it does say beside my name. The fellow who brings it in says it's a bill and I have to pay it. What's it for? I ask. He tells me that he's left the bills hang-

ing on a hook inside the kitchen when he took the goods up. I don't believe that he did more than half the time, but even if he did I don't propose to do his book-keeping for him and go out in my kitchen every day and ask the cook for the latest bunch of provision bills. Why, if all the merchants here did business on that plan, I would have to hire a book-keeper to keep me posted on what I was paying for, so that I'd have some idea of whether I was getting my own or somebody else's slips on the hook. Get the hook for that scheme anyway."

"I'd never thought of it in just that way," said Barlow. "It's a very convenient scheme in some ways for the merchant."

"Oh yes, no doubt. But it makes an awfully queer set of books. I know a man who's got one of these big boxes in his store with a set of accounts in it and he's worried to death all the time for fear the store will burn and he'll lose the accounts. He can't put the thing in the safe and it's just about as fireproof as that little tin cash box that I used to lug back and forth night and morning with my currency and bills in. You want your accounts in such shape that you can keep them in the safe.

"Now, I've given this thing some thought off and on and I'll just name over to you some of

the disadvantages that your cash system mustn't possess. Some of them go with one kind of a plan and some with another. I won't go into details about them because you can understand them without. Here they are. It mustn't be slow. It mustn't increase mistakes. It mustn't permit dishonesty or theft. It mustn't be expensive to operate. It mustn't be slow to balance up at night. It musn't leave any more to the clerk than is necessary; a machine makes less mistakes than a person. It mustn't produce a record of only part of the sales. It mustn't get out of order. It mustn't necessitate goods and money and sales slip and everything else going off somewhere out of sight of the customer to stay anywhere from ten minutes to half an hour while the customer can't do anything but wonder and get hot under the collar. It mustn't make it possible for customers to walk out without paying for their purchases as they can do pretty easily sometimes when they are supposed to go to a cashier and settle. It shouldn't make it necessary to count up the money any time of day when it's desirable to know how much business has been done. It shouldn't be merely a cash system but it ought to be a complete credit system as well. In some stores to make a cash sale takes one system.

To make a credit sale takes another. To make a check or coupon for the customer takes still another. I don't know how many faults there are that a cash handling system may have but I guess about a hundred thousand. It's generally easy to find flaws in anything."

"That's all right, Mr. Jenkins, but I don't see that it brings me any nearer to what I want to know. Suppose you go ahead now and tell me what advantages I want in a cash handling system, what it ought to do. I would like some kind of a plan that will, as you say, get everything, all kinds of sales, under one cover and one operation. I don't suppose I can get everything I want in any one plan, but tell me what I want and then if I can find some system that covers what you say, I'll be all right, and anyway I can probably find the one that comes nearest to it."

"Well, I don't know all the advantages you want, but I guess I can name off more than you'll find in any one system. I don't believe there's a plan or a system or a machine made that will do everything. If there is, you get it tomorrow. You want protection from dishonest clerks — yes you do, whether you have them or not. You may have them sometime and the time to put in a system is now, not when a new

clerk comes in. You want to make it necessary for the clerk to make a record of every business transaction, then it will be a habit and he won't forget to make charges for goods not paid for. And if there is a record of every transaction, you will know what happens while you are out or when you don't happen to be looking. If you can put a mechanical watch on the boys to pick out and show up their mistakes, they won't make so many of them and you won't make so many yourself. They can be corrected and charged up to the right source.

"You want to be able to tell who makes the mistakes if they are made. You want a system that will prevent disputes between the clerk and the customer. You want something that won't keep the customer waiting. I wouldn't do business a minute in one of these stores where a fellow has to cool his heels for a quarter of an hour while they get his change ready for him. A man likes to step in and buy and step right out again. Nix on your long distance money drawer for mine.

"The clerks will make mistakes enough anyway so that you don't want a system that makes mistakes itself. You want to do as much as you can by machinery. It is the human element that falls down and that makes the mis-

takes that cause trouble. The machine generally works all right. It's the man who forgets or who looked the other way for a minute that causes the railroad accidents. The engine runs all right. If you could reduce your cash system to a plan that left the clerk nothing to do but to push a button you would get rid of a whole lot of mistakes. The simpler the work and the more regular, the more nearly the same for every transaction, the less chance of mistakes.

"If you want to keep the clerks honest, put a check on them. Make it necessary that every time they take in money they make a record that can be seen by the customer and that you can see if you want to. When it is left for the clerk to write something in a book or somewhere else if he happens to think of it and wants to, it's left for him to do pretty darned near as he pleases.

"You don't want to bother with any cashier. You never know when you're getting one that's all right, and anyway a good cashier who won't make mistakes costs money and doesn't act as any correction on the clerks because all she can tell about a transaction is what's on the slip that comes to her. She can't be a mind reader — not at the price you could afford to pay. You see, it doesn't cost anything to have the clerks make

"They are supposed to go to the cashier and settle."

their own change and it costs wages of one extra and takes up more of everybody's time to use a cashier.

"Suppose you take a scheme that makes it necessary for the customer to go and pay a cashier before leaving the store. Suppose the customer buys from two or three different clerks and gets a sales slip from each one. Who's going to know that the customer pays more than one of the sales slips? I believe that customers are mainly honest, but I want to tell you, John, that there are a few who aren't honest and if you get a plan they can beat, you'll get all of their trade and it won't make any money for you either.

"A cashier can just about skin you out of all the profit of the business if she wants to do it. You can't stand over a cashier every minute. You might as well be cashier yourself as to do that. You can't spend all your time hanging around watching to see whether the clerks use your cash system right or not. You've got to have something that works right along whether you're there or not.

"The more business you're doing, the more the clerks are rushed, the more chances for mistakes unless you get a system that is pretty nearly all automatic and doesn't leave anything

for the clerk to do but to act as a kind of connecting link between the customer and the place for the money.

"I don't want to spoil anybody's business on cash registers but one kind of a system I wouldn't have and that's one of these fancy, expensive oak money drawers with a desk top with a pad on it or a roll of paper feeding under a glass lid where the clerk is supposed to write down things that people buy. Why, that's nothing in the world but a money drawer with a blank book attached. You can fix up that same thing by just laying a pad down by your old money drawer there and telling the boys to write down in it what they sell. Instead of paying out twenty-five dollars or more for the scheme, it won't cost you more than ten cents for a couple of pads. That system, if it is a system, has all the disadvantages of your old money drawer plan and the additional one that it will take about twice or three times as long to finish up a transaction. Whatever you get, see that it has advantages over the old way all along the line.

"Right in connection with your cash system you want a nice working credit system. You want them working right together so that when a clerk makes a credit sale he has to go through

just about the same motions that he does when he makes a cash sale. You want a credit system that will make it easy to tell how much any man owes you without delay. You want one that keeps all accounts separate and plainly labelled and one that doesn't show all the books of the firm to any customer who happens to want to see his account. And if you want a system that makes it absolutely certain that when anybody pays on account their account is going to get proper credit for the payment, no matter whether they pay the clerk at the counter, the boy on the delivery wagon or someone who goes out to the curb as the customer drives up.

"You want a credit system that keeps a permanent record of every transaction and that doesn't leave you with nothing to go by after the bill has been paid. Every once in a while there is occasion to go behind the returns. You want protection and convenience for yourself, for your customers and for your clerks. You want some kind of a plan that makes it easy to keep track of how much people owe you so that you won't let their accounts get too big and so that you can send them bills often. If you can't get a credit system that gives you all these advantages, you might better go on a cash basis. Half of the troubles of the credit method of doing busi-

ness are due more to the way accounts are kept and handled than to the fact that there are accounts. If you have the right kind of a credit system, the credit basis will get you more business than the cash basis in pretty nearly every case.

"There's just one more view of this thing that I want you to take and that is this. You want a system that will make you pay for everything that you yourself take out of stock in goods and that will make it necessary for you yourself to make a record of it when you take money out of the drawer. You may say that it's all yours anyway and that it doesn't matter, but I want to tell you that it does matter a whole lot in a way you haven't thought of. If your clerks see you taking goods and money when you want them and making no record of it, you will be setting them an example that you don't want followed. Of course it's perfectly honest for you to help yourself to your own and it's perfectly dishonest for them to help themselves to it. But all the same there is an influence even in that apparently harmless habit that has helped before now to make a clerk dishonest. And then, further, if you take goods out of stock as you want them and make no entry or payment of the transaction, you will very likely

effect your business statement for the year a hundred or two hundred dollars in its accuracy. And to take money out of the money drawer without charging it up to yourself is the worst kind of business.

"If I were to talk to you all the afternoon about this business I wouldn't get it all said. You think over what I've told you. I don't know of any perfect money handling system. Perfection isn't human and you don't find any of it in business, but when you find the thing that comes the nearest to it, get it and get it quick, because if it's a good thing to have and a money saver, the sooner it begins to work for you, the sooner it will begin to declare dividends. Now I've got to go and get the ice cream and take it home for dinner. I'll see you again."

Barlow himself stayed behind in the store to think and figure over what Tobias had told him.

SIXTH TALK

SPECIAL NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING

Henry Foss was sweeping the pavement in front of his store one morning when the Old Storekeeper came along and accosted him.

"Henry, come into your emporium and sell me a quarter's worth of those same Rappahanna Stinkadoras that you gave me yesterday. That's a pretty fair cigar considering the store that sells it."

"Didn't I tell you that was a good one?" replied Henry undisturbed by the slanderous name bestowed upon his leading ten center. "I know the man that makes those cigars. He comes pretty near being onto his job. There's stock in those smokes, believe me."

"Why don't you sell more of 'em then?" asked Tobias. "It's a long time since I've bought as good a cigar as that here in Hampton — or anywhere else for that matter."

"Well, I ain't refusing to sell 'em to anyone that wants to buy, am I?"

"A hatter can't leave a sample line of hats for his customer to pick from."

"No, I don't suppose you are, but you ought to advertise them and get up a nice trade on them because they'll stand recommending. If all the smokers in Hampton who buy ten cent cigars could try that brand, I'll bet it would suit nine-tenths of them and they'd come back for more and probably tell their wives to buy them for their Christmas presents."

"How can I get all those smokers to come and try them? I can't afford to send out free samples of every new cigar I get, and as far as my experience goes, this free sampling thing doesn't get you a whole lot of business."

"That's because the samples don't go to the right people. Of course you don't want to hand out samples of ten cent cigars to people who never pay more than a nickel for a smoke. They won't appreciate the goods and they can't afford to buy them. Sampling is the best way of introducing any new brand of goods and it pays if it's handled right. A cigar dealer has an advantage over other merchants. A hatter, for instance, can't leave a sample line of his hats on a customer's table for him to pick from, but you can afford to leave several samples of cigars if it will make a customer for you.

"I believe that you could develop some trade on that cigar through the newspapers. Of

course it costs money to advertise in the newspapers but then it costs money to advertise in almost any way. Why don't you try using a newspaper space in every issue of the best Hampton newspaper? Get a space that is right next to the sporting events and such news as is of the most interest to the men. In that space run some advertisements that will be interesting.

"You can't make a dry, dull kind of advertisement sell cigars or anything else. You've got to make your ads interesting. Cigar advertising wants to be pretty lively and catchy. For instance, if you put into the space an ad that reads, 'Buy your cigars at Foss' Cigar Store. Best goods for the least money,' nobody will ever pay any attention to that. That kind of advertising is money wasted.

"Write a different advertisement for every issue of the paper and make each one of them tell something. Now, I suppose the tobacco in these cigars is probably shade grown tobacco. In one advertisement say that the tobacco used in the Royal King is shade grown tobacco and then go on and tell why shade grown tobacco is better. A whole lot of smokers don't know anything about the fine points of tobacco raising and cigar making.

"In another advertisement, tell about the san-

itary factory these cigars are made in. You said they were made in a sanitary plant, didn't you? If they weren't I don't want them. I'll tell you that.

"And in the next ad explain why a darker shade of tobacco is the best flavor and not necessarily stronger than the pale, sickly, yellowish kinds that fellows pick out when they think they want a mild smoke.

"There's no end of things you can tell about a high class cigar like this. See how the ash sticks there and how nice it is? Why, say I'd make a better salesman for these cigars than you would, Henry. What'll you give me to get these started around town? You can tell smokers how to smoke a cigar too, to get the best out of it and most satisfaction. And I'm not sure but that you can get a lot of five cent smokers to buying ten cent cigars by explaining to them that a ten cent cigar will go as far as two fives, and put a man on a higher plane, make a higher class man of him, give him more self-respect than if he smokes cheap stuff. Get the men to smoking less cigars and better ones and you will do them some good and yourself too.

"It's a good plan to make a little smoker's corner out of your advertisement. Have it a space where people who smoke can find a little

good news, a few interesting items about tobacco and its use every time. You might even head the ad, 'Foss' Smoke Talks' or 'Tobacco News' or something like that. Then if you make good by running some interesting facts in that space you will get smokers in the habit of reading that advertisement. A bright little saying or proverb that will appeal to the smoker, though it is not an advertising phrase, a different one each issue, will get men into the habit of looking there for the latest.

"Cigars and tobacco have got to have a little different treatment in their advertising from shoes and patent medicines. But still, speaking of patent medicine advertising, there's one thing about it that you could copy to advantage in advertising cigars and that's the testimonials. If you can get permission from a few local smokers to quote what they say about your cigar, you will hit the bullseye every time you shoot in one of those quotations. Suppose Judge Simmons, the old rascal, told you over the counter that that Royal King was the best darned cigar he'd ever bought in Hampton? Don't you suppose you'd get the fellow who saw your ad to sit up and take notice if you printed just what the old Judge said? He'd let you do it too. Most old smokers will let you quote them. The man who

doesn't like to see his name given space in the newspaper in a way to show deference to his opinion is a rare exception."

"Joe Blossom's wife said to him the other night that he was getting so he'd rather stand around down town and smoke those Royal King cigars of his than come home to dinner. How'd that do for a testimonial?" Foss asked.

"If you could get permission to print that, you'd have an advertisement that would be worth something. Even if you couldn't get permission to use the names in that case, you could use the quotation and say you'll tell who it was if anyone will come in and ask. People like to read about what their neighbors say and do. Get them into your advertising and you'll make your talks as interesting as the news columns, and I don't know but a good deal more so than some of them.

"Of course you don't want to use all your space telling about one cigar. There are lots of other things in your stock that need to be advertised. Smokers like to know about new things, about novelties. They are always trying new cigarettes, new tobaccos, new stogies, etc. They come back to the old favorites a good many times, but something new is attractive and you want to have the reputation of being up to date

and having as much that's new as anybody has. Whenever you have a novelty that's worth mentioning, mention it. If it's a pocket cigar lighter, tell about it. If it's a new kind of pipe, describe it. If it's a cigarette a little different or a little better in value than the old brands, tell your readers. You know pretty well what kind of things interest smokers. Don't waste space telling them about things they don't care anything about when you know of enough things they do care about.

"There's one kind of smoke that it pays to advertise and that mighty few cigar stores do advertise much, and that's the extremely mild kind. The woods are full of men who know that they smoke too much but they can't seem to stop. These men are looking for something mild. If they are old smokers they sometimes feel sort of ashamed to come in and ask for the mildest cigar you've got. They think it stamps them as cheap sports. And a good many young smokers who might better be smoking something mild are getting hold of cigars too strong for them because they like to come in and call for a cigar by name as if they knew what they were about.

"Do you know what I'd do if I was in the cigar business? I'd get hold of the very mildest

ten cent cigar I could find, one that wouldn't hurt anybody to smoke and I'd advertise it enough so that all these people who ought to be smoking mild smokes and know it, could come in and call for that cigar by name and know what they were getting?"

"That's a good scheme," said Henry. "I'm going to try that out. I know of just the cigar. Just got a small box of 'em in to-day."

SELLING CHRISTMAS GIFTS TO WOMEN

"Another reason why you ought to be using the newspapers right along now is that the holiday trade is here already for you to make money on it. You've got a good line of all kinds of smokes here. I can tell because I know what a cigar stock ought to look like. Well, there isn't a smoker in town but would be glad to get smokes for Christmas if he could get the kind he likes to smoke.

"The funny papers have joked so long about the cigars a man's wife gives him for Christmas that no woman dares to take a chance now on buying cigars for her husband for Christmas. She knows that she can't tell anything about cigars and she's afraid his friends will get onto the fact that she gave him poor cigars.

"The thing for you to do is to advertise cigars

for Christmas presents. Just make it plain that every smoker appreciates good cigars as a present and them make it plainer yet that you have the kind of smokes that will suit the smoker.

" Advertise like this: ' If your husband smokes, he'll appreciate a gift of cigars that he likes. I know what kind he likes. It's my business to know. Come to my store and I'll sell you a box or a half a box or a quarter's worth of cigars that will suit him. Probably I know just the brand he likes best, but if I sell you cigars for anybody's Christmas you can give them with the assurance that if the recipient would rather have some other brand, he can trot right around to my store and I'll exchange with him for any other kind he wants.' When a woman finds that she can buy cigars like that, she'll buy 'em.

'" And you aren't taking any chances because you can make the exchange when it's necessary without any loss and if it brings to your store to exchange a fellow who has been buying his smokes somewhere else, you have a first class chance to get him started on one of your brands.

" Then you've got lots of other things beside cigars that make good Christmas presents to smokers. Pipes ought to be big sellers all through December and here again a woman doesn't know much about what to buy and you

ought to offer to sell them with the privilege of exchange. That's about the only way a woman will buy for presents anything she isn't posted on.

" You can develop a nice little Christmas business on some of these goods by getting out a circular letter and sending it to the wives of the men who buy their cigars from you and to wives of those who don't too. The average woman has a hard time finding what to buy for her old man for Christmas. He says he doesn't want anything and she knows he does and he'll be sore if she doesn't get him something. He'll be sour if she gets him something he doesn't want because that means money wasted. But send the wife a circular explaining how you are ready to help her get her husband for Christmas just the thing that will suit him and she ought to welcome the suggestion.

" Christmas offers a cigar dealer an opportunity to get rid of some unsalable goods too. I don't mean that it's a chance for him to unload a lot of poor stuff, because I don't believe it ever pays to fool anyone by selling them a box of bad cigars just on the chance that they will never know they were bad. When a man is handed a box of cigars for Christmas it is often accompanied by the remark, ' I don't know what you

smoke and these may not be any good but Foss told me they were the best brand he had and I had to go by his word on it.' There you are, you see, if the cigars are bum, you get a black eye with that man right away. You've stuck him with some poor cigars and you've fooled an innocent customer. If you can fool the smoker it's better than fooling the non-smoker.

"What I mean by working off unsalable goods is that you have in your cases certain brands of perfectly good cigars that there is no longer any call for. The cigars are all right only they're kind of out of fashion, so to speak. There are always a few boxes on hand of such brands that the store is ready to close out. Get rid of them at Christmas time. It's the same with some other goods. These goods need not be specifically advertised. It is salesmanship that sells them.

"If you want to make some special holiday packages out of staple stock in hand, use holly paper and holly tape or ribbon and sprigs of holly or mistletoe in dressing up boxes. Use 'Merry Christmas' and Santa Claus labels, tags and stickers to give a Christmas air to boxes of cigars. It is possible in such ways to make staple packages look like special packages and the labels, etc., may be removed after Christmas so

that the stock unsold is not the same out of season looking stuff that actual special goods will be.

"Another thing I would advertise just before Christmas is that you will deliver presents to any address in town and that when desired you will wrap and ship by mail or express any goods bought at your store so that people wanting to send cigars to distant friends may simply come in and pay for the goods and leave a card to be inserted and your store does the rest. This service takes a good deal of responsibility off from the shoulders of the shopper and you can afford to do the work for the profit in the goods.

"People who are not in the habit of patronizing your store hesitate about asking such favors as the above of you and they are apt to buy something different or to buy their cigar presents at a general store where they are in the habit of trading, to get the service they hate to ask from you. It pays at holiday time to advertise service because people appreciate it betten then. This is where the exclusive cigar store has the advantage over the store that makes cigars simply one line in many and is so rushed that it cannot give anyone the kind of service that you can give at your busiest season.

"Deliver presents to any address in town."

"Don't forget to make your windows more attractive than usual at the Christmas season. Make them attractive in a different way too. The usual cigar store window has no attraction for a woman. The woman's attention is what you want to get just now and in order to do this it is necessary to use show cards that will draw her to the window. Just cigars, no matter how well shown will not do it because she realizes that all cigars look alike to her.

"Use a big show card reading something like this, 'Does HE Smoke? We sell Christmas cigars that we guarantee HE will like'; or 'Buy HIM a box of these cigars at $2.08. If HE wants to change them for another brand he can do so.' Here is another card suggestion: 'Ladies! A Suggestion! Give HIM a box of these cigars,' or 'HE will like these cigars. We guarantee their quality.'

"You know what I mean; something to attract the women and show them that they can buy from you a box of cigars that their men will like, or that can be exchanged if they do not suit. And by letting them exchange them I mean let them bring back the whole full box or part of it after some of the cigars have been smoked. Be generous about it because the sales you get on account of the offer are apt to be just so

much velvet, so much goods that you otherwise would not have sold.

" Advertising is what sells the goods at Christmas time and everybody else is after the Christmas present trade so you will have to stir yourself if you get your share. You probably think that I'm offering a good deal of advice for a fellow who never ran a cigar store but I'll tell you right now that running a cigar store isn't as different from running some other kinds of a store as you might think. I want to see you do the biggest December business you ever did and if you give this advertising matter enough care and work, you'll get the business. Now, give me another quarter's worth of those famous cigars and I'll be off. What? Well if you insist I'll take 'em but I don't believe you'll make any money handing out free goods like that. Good bye! I'll be in again after Christmas probably."

SEVENTH TALK

DELIVERING THE GOODS

For some weeks Jack Henderson continued to be very attentive to Dolly Dingle and since Jack was a popular fellow with the Hampton girls his apparent infatuation with this new girl who " worked in a store " had its effect upon a few of his friends who put on toplofty airs and thought themselves a little better than other people.

Some of these near-aristocratic young ladies turned up their noses at Jack and Dolly and he was left out of some of the parties. Further than this there was a falling off in the purchases of the offended damsels at Larry Benjamin's store.

While Jack's boss did not say anything to him about it, it gradually dawned upon the head clerk of John Barlow's strongest competitor that his actions were unpolitic to say the least.

He was a good deal taken with Miss Dolly but he was a light-headed youth and thought more

of having all the girls like him than of having just one. The result of this was that he began to use some care about where he was seen with Dolly.

He had not been careful more than two or three times before he found himself possessed of a beautifully frosted "mitten," handed to him by Dolly herself. Every girl knows intuitively and instantly when her escort feels even the least bit ashamed of her or of being seen with her, no matter what the reason.

Dolly's affections had not been touched in the slightest degree and she did not hesitate a moment about what to do when she saw how Jack Henderson felt.

Jerry Barnard however was waiting to take Jack's place. He had been a worshipful admirer of Dolly from the first time she appeared in the store. And when the Christmas Holiday season came, with its attendant rush of trade which gave no one much time for love-making, it found Barlow fretting more about the fact that he could not keep Jerry away from Dolly than about how to handle the Christmas business.

One feature of the business though was calling for attention and at last it compelled Barlow to give it some decided thought.

It was the delivery question. The store did

not send out clerks to take orders but it did deliver goods all over town. It had done this from the first and the town covered a good deal of territory and it occupied the time of one or sometimes two clerks much of the day getting ready anything from a five cent purchase up.

The proprietor of the store thought that his delivery privilege was being abused. He began to get sore about it and he acted a little peevish when a woman would telephone in to have a spool of thread sent out at once.

He sat at his desk one morning with a big sheet of figures before him trying to figure out how much money he lost on a spool of thread that he had to deliver a quarter of a mile, when in through the back door came the Old Storekeeper with his collar turned up around his ears and his nose red.

"Br-r-r-r! Ain't this a dandy winter day? Why the dickens don't you get out and get a little fresh air instead of sitting here doubled up over your desk like a woodchuck chewing at a clover?"

Barlow got up and pushed a chair over by the radiator for Tobias and replied,

"I've got troubles enough of my own without worrying about how to get oxygen into my system. Say, how much do you suppose I lose

on a five cent spool of thread that I have to take clear out to Granny Bitter's house on a telephone order?"

"You lose about as much as Charley McGuire lost when he paid his brother in-law a dollar for a little piece of cheap pasteboard that turned out to be the winning ticket in the lottery drawing for that month. You've heard how he kicked about that for a while?"

"Where's there any chance to win in this lottery?" asked Barlow sourly.

"Well, I'm not going to say that delivering the goods is a source of profit and pleasure to everyone concerned. And I'm not going to say that it wouldn't be better if no one had to do it. Personally I think this co-operative delivery idea is a pretty good one; delivering all done by one man who makes it his business and every fellow pays for having his stuff taken out. If I was selling some lines of goods that won't maintain a delivery department I certainly would hire my delivering done. But I would deliver if my competitors made any pretense of doing it and I'd do it so well that I'd have them beat a mile.

"Almost everyone does deliver and you've got to do it or else pay the customer for taking his goods home by making him a special price. As long as you've got to pay for it anyway,

rather than pay the customer, you might better have the work done by your own help and see that they do it right.

"Of course you don't make any profit on that particular spool of thread itself, but if you take the order cheerfully and deliver it quickly you get the good will of Granny Bitters and I'm not sure but it's worth quite a little money to have a gossipy old woman like her on your side. You certainly can't afford to be cross and refuse to send the goods or she'd turn every woman on her street against you, and if you act peevish about doing it you don't get any credit for the delivering and have all the trouble of it just the same.

"But you ought to try to use a little salesmanship in such cases. When a woman calls you up and asks for the delivery of some item that is so small that she knows you are doing her a favor to bring it to her, take advantage of the situation and suggest that perhaps there is something else she would like when your delivery boy is coming right out that way. Call her attention to certain new things you have or certain specials for that day and if she does not want to order anything else get the privilege of sending up by the boy some new goods for her to look at.

"As long as a fellow is going to do delivering he might just as well make it pay him as much as possible. The delivering ought to be done by one or more employés who make it their chief business. For one thing it can be done by cheaper help than you use inside of the store, and for another, if a fellow makes a specialty of delivering goods, he gets so he can do it better and quicker, just like anybody does anything better for making a specialty of it.

"I know of storekeepers who claim that they deliver goods anywhere in town and then when anyone asks them to send something up they say "Ouch!" Not in just so many words perhaps, but they look it just as much as if you had stepped on their toes. Now that's no way to make a customer happy. You advertise 'Goods delivered anywhere within a mile of the store' and then because the customer orders something that you don't make much money on, you act sore about it.

"It's just like offering a premium with every purchase of a certain amount of goods and then trying to keep the customer from buying enough goods to get it. If it pays at all to deliver or to give a premium, why doesn't it pay better to do more of it? Why isn't the best plan to get all the business of the sort that you can get?

"I don't have but mighty little patience with the fellow who gets a grouch because I take him up on his own proposition, do you?"

Barlow admitted that he did not have and he went on to ask,

"How can I make this delivering bring me more business? We advertise, 'Goods delivered anywhere in town promptly' and we do deliver promptly but I can't see that it is bringing any more business."

"Your business is growing, isn't it?" asked Tobias.

"Yes," admitted the other.

"Well, how the dickens do you know that all or part of that growth isn't due to your delivering the goods?"

"Chiefly because the most of our growth is among the farmers to whom we don't deliver — and then we have to give some credit to the advertising."

"If that's the way of it, I'll tell you why delivering doesn't get you any special advantage. You don't deliver any better than your competitors. They advertise the same thing and they do it just as you do it. My wife ordered something from here a few days ago that she wanted in a hurry. It was at ten o'clock in the morning. You took the order yourself and you said it

would be sent up inside of an hour. At four in the afternoon it came. What do you know about that?"

Barlow blushed guiltily. "Well, you see," said he, "I forgot and —"

"Yes, I know. Somebody must have forgot, but how does that fact help a woman who has gone ahead and made her plans and counted on having a certain purchase in the house in an hour? Now, I know of other times and of other people who have found this store a little short on memory and if you can explain how that sort of delivering could possibly get anybody any business or hold any of the old business, tell me quick."

"You can't prevent some mistakes in doing business," said Barlow a little sullenly.

"I see you can't. There may be some relation between those mistakes and the fact that delivering the goods hasn't got you more trade. Now, I'll tell you what I'd do if I were in your place. I'd specialize on this delivery business a little. And I'd do it without advertising the fact to my competitors in advance. Sort o' steal a march on them.

"This is your busiest time of year. People are buying a lot of things now and they often take them home with them because they are

afraid they wouldn't be delivered promptly enough. They would rather have their purchases sent up and in a good many cases they would add something to them if they were going to be sent.

"I'd put on an extra boy or two for the delivering now. I'd tell every town customer who comes in, whether buying anything or not, that you are taking special pains with deliveries now and sending goods out almost as soon as they are bought and ask if there isn't something you can send up.

"I'd almost insist upon people leaving the purchases they make here and the packages they already have that have come from other stores, so that you can deliver them. I'd say enough about it too, so that it would leave an impression. And I'd see that the goods were sent out just as I said they would be. Just before Christmas I'd advertise in the newspapers that you will send Christmas goods anywhere in town for examination, sending a messenger with them to show the goods and bring them back or get the money.

"There are always a lot of people who can't get out at all to do any Christmas shopping and there are always some people who, on account of lack of time, or on account of illness, or the weather, can't get out at the last minute and

"I would send a clerk to the house to show them the goods."

they want to make some last purchases. It's the same way with other holidays beside Christmas when people are buying more than usual in your line. This little scheme will get a lot of extra trade and a good deal of it is likely to come out of your competitor's share."

"I wonder how it would do to work some such plan in connection with a special sale," suggested Barlow interestedly.

"Fine! I worked it once myself the first year we had a telephone exchange in town. I put on a special February sale and I made some offers that opened people's eyes too. I chopped the profit all off from one or two lines. And then I advertised that anyone in town who could not come to the sale could have the sale brought to them. I told them they could take advantage of it by telephoning or sending word in any way. I said I would send a clerk to the house to show them the goods they wanted to see and they needn't buy unless there was something they wanted."

"Didn't people buy the goods that paid no profit so that you didn't get anything out of the trip to show them samples?"

"My son, you're a little short-sighted. Of course people telephoned for the bargain goods and of course the clerk took them, but your

Uncle Dudley knew that would be the case so he always sent along with the specials a few things that he himself thought would interest the person who was going to be interviewed. I made a good many of the trips myself and the rest were all made by a clerk I had who could sell options on a rainbow if it had a good color.

"Of course it took a good deal of time to see all these people but when the calls began to get ahead of me, I just sent them a post card saying that everyone asking us to call would be visited in turn and even if we could not get to all of them before the sale closed they would have their chance at the bargains just the same.

"It took a week more than the sale time to see them all — but maybe we didn't sell a lot of goods to those people who let us get right inside of their houses with the goods and our talk!

"Now I'm going to advise you to do something that you won't do. You have to do all your delivering now by a boy on foot or on a bicycle, or with your one horse delivery wagon. Do you know that for about what it costs you for one delivery boy and bicycle — two parts of the time — and for the expenses of a horse and wagon and a man to take care of it and run it, you could run a nice automobile delivery cart that would increase your delivery radius at least

five miles and save no end of time and be the finest kind of an advertisement for the progressiveness of your store?

"Of course automobile delivery wagons are common enough nowadays in lots of places but they aren't so common yet but that one of them gives a store a prestige over the fellows who haven't got one. And in a town like this where nobody uses one, you could make yourself easily the biggest toad in the puddle.

"Oh yes, I know what you're thinking. You've had it in mind for a good while to get a nice red runabout that would tear off about seventy-five miles an hour and use it to take Miss Dolly Dingle kiting around the country on Sundays where none of the other boys could get her. Well, I don't find any fault with your tastes as far as girls go but I find a lot of fault with your judgment.

"Just take the advice of a man who has taken just as much advice as he ever gave and don't go to developing your speed mania until you have developed your business to where it will stand it. The fellow who goes ahead and develops an automobile taste when he's only got a velocipede salary will in a little while find himself back on his velocipede — if he's had enough sense to keep it.

"Until a man has his business all built up and fully paid for he hasn't any business indulging in the game of boring with a big auger. Of course a man has to have some fun and he certainly needs a lot of recreation just to keep him fit for his work, but when he gets the idea that he can't have any fun without spending a lot of money to get it, he has another think coming.

"You know who Jonas Tarbottle is? Well, Jone got things coming his way pretty well and he thought he had to have a trotting horse. So he bought one and unfortunately it won the first race he entered it in. That was enough to start Jone going. It got him so excited that he was giving down-weight on granulated sugar and selling $40 cigars six for a quarter.

"When it got to where he had to have a better trainer because he was losing all his races, he put on a special sale of staples at prices 25% below cost and raked in a lot of money and let go of pretty near all of his stock that was any good. The new trainer couldn't make his three-minute nag step in the two-twenty class and so the whole campaign fell down and the horse and store and stock were sold by a man called the Sheriff. Since then, as you're aware, Jone's been janitor of the high school building and the M. E. Church and his wife does hair washing and manicuring

for the folks whose husbands know enough to keep their bread from falling butter-side down."

"I see the point," said Barlow.

"Then I guess it's time for me to go to dinner," and Tobias buttoned up his coat and started for the door.

When almost there he turned back and said,

"One thing more that I see you're thinking of now. Don't try to figure on a way that you can make a forty horse power automobile built on what the advertisements call 'classy lines,' do for a delivery car week-days and a touring car Sundays. If you can make a delivery car do to ride in Sundays, that will be well enough, but it won't work first rate the other way."

With another semi-guilty flush Barlow turned around and looked out of the back window as his friend went away.

EIGHTH TALK

THE DEALER'S BEST HELP

"Got any fire in here?" asked the Old Storekeeper of Henry Foss as he breezed into his cigar store one cold morning a day or so later.

"Have I got any fire?" replied Henry. "Well, what do you think I am, an Esquimau? Did you ever come in here on a cold day when I didn't have a good fire? I believe in keeping my store comfortably warm in winter and comfortably cool in summer."

"And you're just right about it too," said Tobias. "I can't see what some fellows are thinking about to let their stores get hot and fly-bitten in warm weather and cold and frost-bitten in winter. You'd think that anybody who has sense enough to run a store at all would have sense enough to know that people will buy more when they are comfortable than when their fingers are too numb to count money, or when they are so hot they can't pick up a postage

stamp and let go of it again without washing it off.

"You've got the right idea. I'll say that much for you. And from the looks of things I'll bet it's paying you pretty well. They say you're making more money than any other man in Hampton."

"You don't want to believe all you hear," said Henry, but he smiled like a basket of chips when he said it, for what business man was there ever who did not like to have people think him prosperous?

"I've been noticing one thing lately about your store and that is that you are always right on deck with the latest goods advertised in the magazines. Now, that's what I call enterprise — having the new things that the big manufacturers are spending their money to make sell. I don't believe in a fellow in any line of business loading up with every new thing that comes along, but when a good, reliable house starts a big advertising campaign on something new they've added to their line, I believe the thing for the retailer to do is to get in enough of the goods so that when the first demand comes it will find him ready. The chap who has the goods for the first demands is the one who is going to get the second sales. If you wait until there is so much call for the goods

that you just have to put them in, you are too late. Somebody else has got the reputation for having them and you will lose the best of the business, and as likely as not a few good customers beside."

"Well, that's about the way I've figured it out," said Henry. "For a time I used to get a grouch whenever I saw a big manufacturer jumping out with big magazine space. It looked as if he was trying to compel me to sell his goods. Finally I thought, suppose he is trying to make me sell them? Don't I want to sell goods? Ain't that what I'm here for? What do I care whose goods I sell if I make money on them? And I concluded that if anyone wanted to get up a demand that would make it easy for me to sell anything, from Big-and-Bad chewing tobacco to self-starting spring tooth harrows, I'd be game and sell the goods and keep the money."

"Do you know what a merchant told me the other day, Henry?" asked Tobias.

"What was that?"

"Well, he was talking about this same thing, about the advertising in the magazines and how it kept people coming in and asking for new things all the time and he said, 'There's a big bunch of money being spent on this advertising every month and most of the goods aren't worth

powder to blow 'em up.' I said to him: 'Wait! You don't believe that and neither do I.' Of course not all advertised goods are top notch quality, but they average pretty blamed high. A concern that's going to spend ten thousand or a hundred thousand dollars in getting the public to try a brand of anything isn't going to give it goods that it won't come back to buy again.

"The first sales of such advertised goods won't bring in money enough to pay the interest on the sum invested in advertising. Folks have got to come back and buy more and tell their friends about the goods and get them to try them and this has got to go on for quite a while before there will be anything in it for the manufacturer. Is a man going to put trash on the market under those conditions? Not on your life!

"The wise little retailer is going to have the goods that people call for and those are to a big extent going to be the advertised goods. And he's going to tie up to the big advertisers and let them send him store signs and other stuff to help make the goods go. You're doing all this and you're doing it right. No wonder you're making money."

"Well, I am making a little money," admitted Henry, "but I want to make more and I want to know how to do it. Perhaps you can tell me."

"I can tell you how you can find out," said Tobias. "I don't know an awful lot about your particular line but I'll tell you how any business man can find out how to make good and what will help him to do it."

"I'm listening pretty hard for that kind of information," Henry said as he hitched his chair over toward where the Old Storekeeper had sat down behind the stove.

"There isn't any secret about it," Tobias went on. "When you went to school in the little old red schoolhouse over on Pine Brook they set you at studying your arithmetic to learn how to add and subtract, and they set you at the geography to learn where places were. Whatever you wanted to learn, they gave you a book that told all about that subject and you learned it out of the book. In those days we thought that if we wanted to know about almost anything, the place to find out was in some book or paper where it was all written up by somebody who knew.

"After we got out of school and began to learn a few things by experience, a lot of us got the notion that we could learn everything without any help, and I'm not sure but that a good many of us got another notion that we knew so much that there wasn't anything of any conse-

quence left worth learning. Anyway nine merchants in ten never think of trying to learn more about their business by studying about it in books and papers.

"Business isn't a matter of luck, and it isn't a game that's run on a kind of guess-work basis. It's subject to certain rules and it's perfectly foolish for a man to think that he's born with all those rules in his head, or that he can pick them up quicker or better for himself than he can learn them out of a book written by some one who has already learned them. Who would ever think of trying to learn the rule of three by experimenting with figures? Business is a lot more complicated than arithmetic or geography or spelling. It's as complicated as all of them, and then some. There isn't any one text book that covers the whole of it. It's too big a subject. A fellow has to dig into a lot of different books to get what he wants. He finds some things in one, some in another, and more yet in the trade journals.

"And what I'm getting at in all this talk is that the trade journal is the place where a man ought to go for information about how to develop his business, how to get more customers, how to make better profits. The trade journal is the text book of the business. There are plenty of

these trade papers in every line and the man who is in business ought to have a good one covering every line of goods that he handles. Just taking one paper doesn't help enough. One is good but more are better. You don't want to look for very much results from a homeopathic treatment of trade journals.

"There was a time when men bought stores and stocked them with goods, sold the goods and put the money into a sliding box they called a money drawer and took it out again as they needed it for cigars or family expenses or to buy more goods with. They kept this up till they were finally closed out by death or the sheriff.

"People don't do business that way any more. They have a system. They have studied how to do business and they have learned better ways of handling all kinds of transactions. Now, there was old Josey Gordon who kept the market on the corner of Greene street before you can remember. He sold a ham one day and forgot to charge it. When it came time to close up at night he remembered selling the ham but he couldn't for the life of him remember who bought it. So he charged it up to everybody who'd had anything charged that day and they all paid for it but one man and he skipped with-

out paying his bill at all. That proves there's money in a credit business, but it proves too that a man needs to have a system that will keep him from neglecting charges and other things. And the place to learn about systems and about every other thing that helps business is right in the pages of the trade journals.

"Why, Henry, ten dollars a year invested in trade journal subscriptions will keep a man in touch with the very latest in business methods all along the line and it will keep him posted on the newest goods of every kind he sells and it will bring him in returns that will be a good many times the ten dollars.

"I've picked up more live sellers from the trade papers and their advertising pages than I ever got from the jobbers' salesmen who used to call on me. A traveling man is all right. I like them and I believe in treating them right, but I believe they are working for their own houses and they miss a lot of things that the trade papers tell about and that other houses carry.

"The man who tries to hitch along without reading anything about what's going on outside in his lines of goods is pretty sure to develop into a Grandfather Man, a man who's satisfied to run things the way his father and his grandfather ran them before him. That's a nice,

quiet, peaceful way of doing business but it won't get you very far along.

"A man can't stand still. It he isn't growing into a better business man, he's dropping back into being a poorer one. What do you think of a doctor or a lawyer who starts in to practice and gives up studying his profession and depends upon his own experiences to keep him up to the times? You think he's not of much account, don't you? There can't any doctor in that class cut out my vermiform appendix. No sir. When I want first class medical advice I'm going to a doctor who gets the medical journals and reads them.

"That last is a pretty important part of it too. It isn't going to help a man's business much to subscribe for a lot of trade journals and then run through them and read the jokes and look at the pictures and drop them into the waste basket. Handling trade journals that way would help a merchant's business just about as much as buying a bottle of liniment and rubbing the wrapper on his back would help his rheumatism. You've got to get out what's in the bottle, what's in the journal, or it won't do you a bit of good. Show me a man's trade journals after they've been in his store a month and I'll tell you what kind of a business man he is.

"Of course all these trade journals are published to make money, but I don't believe that any of them can make much money unless they are a success at showing their readers how to make it. A man will perhaps subscribe for a trade paper for one year without knowing that it's any good, but they won't catch him the next year. After he's wise to its contents, if it hasn't made good with him, back into the post office it goes, marked 'Refused.' I've cut off enough of them myself because they weren't helping me. But the poor ones are pretty well weeded out now. They've gone to the magazine graveyard where they belong.

"You don't want to stop with what information you can get out of the trade journal pages. You want to feel free to write to the editor about anything. If you want information about anything that you can't locate anywhere else, write to the editor of a trade journal and I'll bet you'll get what you're after. These trade journal fellows don't know everything themselves, but I've noticed that any information that they haven't got on tap they can get or can tell you where you can get it. I never saw one of them stuck yet.

"The trade journal gets a man closer to the market. Most of us live a good ways from the

big markets, from the centers where the new goods are coming out and from where the styles are set. Of course the new things get around to us after a while by the regular route but sometimes they come too late to be of much use. The mail order buyers in town beat us to it. They see the new things advertised in the city dailies and send for them and by the time our stock comes, everyone is supplied. There isn't any need of a man being so far behind in getting the late goods, because he can learn about them in the trade journals just as soon as they are in the market.

"What a man can't find in the reading pages of a first class trade journal he can find in the advertising pages, and I'm not at all sure that they aren't the best pages anyway. If I couldn't have but part of some of the trade magazines I know of, I'd choose the advertising part. And I wouldn't stop with choosing it either. I'd use it. I'd sit down every time a new number came and I'd go right through it and answer every advertisement of goods that there was any possibility of my selling. Of course this would result in a lot of information that I might not care for, but if I got just one good and profitable line or item out of the lot, it would pay me well.

One good line may make the difference between the success and the failure of a store.

"You don't find any fake advertisers in the pages of a good trade journal now any more than you do in any high class magazine. Every advertisement is worth noticing and most of them are worth answering.

"You asked me how you could make more money and I told you that I would tell you where you could find out how. Well, I haven't been very far off from the track any of the time. You can find out from the trade journals how to make more money and how to do more business. The journals that you can get nowadays are full of stuff written by the best men in the business in the country and those fellows are telling you in every issue how you can improve your business condition and develop more trade. They know what they're talking about. You can get the best brains in your line of business all working for you for a few dollars every year. The trade journal is the dealer's best help.

"Every merchant ought to clip out of his trade journals all the items of interest in them and he ought to put these clippings into scrap books or into alphabetical files. A good way is to have a lot of big envelopes numbered from '1' up,

"Every merchant ought to put these clippings into scrap books."

and in an indexed memorandum book, list under 'A' the subjects like Advertising, Advertisement Writing, Awnings, and anything else of interest to the management of the store and beginning with A, and give the number of the file where you keep clippings on those subjects. The same plan should be followed right through the alphabet. Of course the names of the subjects covered by the contents should be on the envelopes too.

"With a set of clippings like this growing bigger all the time, a man would always have a lot of good ideas to turn to on any subject he was interested in. This plan of filing the clippings under alphabetical headings is better than a scrap book, unless you want to make a whole set of scrap books, one covering each subject.

"Ideas that you don't need just now will come in handy later and there's plenty of matter printed in the trade papers that never gets printed anywhere else and that's mighty well worth saving too.

"You don't want to stop with reading the trade papers yourself. You want everybody connected with the store to read them. The more a clerk learns about the business and the faster he learns it, the more he will be worth to the store. I believe that it pays a man to sub-

scribe for a good trade journal to be sent right to the home address of his clerk, of each of them if he has more than one. Then the young man or the girl will get time to read it and develop all the more interest in the business in general and in your business in particular.

"Well, Henry, I don't want to tire you all out with this trade journal talk. I'm kind of a crank on the subject. Even if I'm not in business any longer myself I take all the trade journals I can find in the lines I used to sell and I read them too. They suit me better than some of these pretty girl near-fiction magazines that give a fellow the mental indigestion once a month.

"You try subscribing for the journals in your line and if you can't find out which are the good ones, call on me and I'll pick them out for you. I'm going home now and read a batch that came yesterday. Give me a 'quarter's' worth of those Royal Kings and I'll beat it."

Tobias was no sooner out of sight than Henry sat down to write for sample copies of the journals he knew about. He knew that the Old Storekeeper was pretty nearly the best judge of what would help a man get business and he proposed to follow the advice he had received.

NINTH TALK

THE TRAVELING MAN

The health of the Old Storekeeper's wife made it necessary for him to spend the winter in the south that year and as he left very soon after the last talk with Barlow, he did not have a chance to see him again for more than a few minutes at a time before going.

The leaves were just coming out green again when Tobias came back to Hampton and he lost no time the morning after his arrival in getting down town to see what changes had taken place in his absence and to shake hands with his old friends.

There was not a more popular man in town than Tobias Jenkins. He had been asked two or three times, once at least by each political party, to run for county sheriff and had refused, which left him more friends than he would have had if he had run, whatever the result of the contest might have been.

One of the first things he noticed was the fact

"He noticed a shiny automobile delivery car."

that Larry Benjamin's windows were dirty and the displays in them untidy. That set him thinking.

The next thing he noticed was a shiny automobile delivery car scooting up the street with "Barlow's" in big red letters on the side.

"Well, well, well," he ejaculated under his breath. "This certainly does look as if John had things coming his way."

He had not quite reached Barlow's store when he met the proprietor coming up the street. As soon as the latter saw Tobias, he quickened his steps and came up to him with his hand outstretched and greeted him cordially, though no more so than Tobias greeted his successor. All of the Old Storekeeper's rough and ready advice, though much of it was not very pleasant to hear or take, had not lessened Barlow's liking for him in any degree.

"I certainly am glad to see you back again," said the younger man. "It has been a mighty long and cold winter and you didn't make any mistake getting away from it. How's Mrs. Jenkins?"

"Oh, she's a hundred per cent. better. I'm pretty darned glad to be back myself. No going South for mine. Good old snow suits me in the winter time. Say, what on earth have you been

doing to Larry Benjamin? And where did you get that automobile? It is a good thing for me to go out of town once in a while I guess."

"Well, Mr. Jenkins, I must say that it looks as if things were coming my way. Come along up to the house while I take up this mail for mother and I'll tell you the story of my life."

They turned and went up the street together arm in arm like a couple of old cronies. On the way Barlow told about what he had done to boom his business during the winter.

He had taken the advice of Tobias and bought a delivery car which he had run all winter with the exception of a few times when there was too much snow. He had extended his free delivery service to a radius of five miles from the store and by this means had cornered all the trade of the farmers living inside of that distance. It had been necessary to assist the auto at times with a bicycle delivery by the youngest clerk but the expense had proved no more than his previous delivery expense and the results in gain in business alone had paid for the car.

His clerks had all felt as if the store had advanced in class and they had developed into higher class help and better dressed and better acting people. So much for the influence of a single improvement.

And most important of all he had won the love of Dolly Dingle and told Tobias, with all the satisfaction of an accepted lover, that they were going to be married in the fall.

Tobias received all this news with a cordial interest, and extended congratulations enthusiastically. When at last he had the whole story, he said,

"This has been your busy winter all right, hasn't it? I hope you won't get the idea that because things are coming your way you can sit down and watch 'em come. The more they come, the more you want to keep after 'em."

"I'm going to try not to let up on it a bit. I've decided not to take any vacation this summer. Instead I'm going to take half days off at a time and use them working on our place, getting the garden and yard looking better."

"You are certainly getting domestic with a vengeance," said Tobias. "I guess I'll go in and look at your garden now."

"It's just being worked. I'm going to put in an hour there this morning and if you'll come along I'll show you a good imitation of a man working."

The two went out through to the garden in the rear of Barlow's home and just as Tobias

had settled down on a comfortable bench and the younger man had got his coat off one of the clerks came in on a bicycle and called to his employer, "There's a traveling man down at the store to see you. He says he's got a new line of fall dress goods."

"Tell him there's nothing doing," shouted Barlow and went on getting out his tools.

The clerk turned and went back. Tobias sat and smoked in silence while Barlow raked away at a lettuce bed, getting ready to put in the seed.

Finally he stopped and exclaimed,

"That fellow must have had his nerve right with him!"

"You mean the drummer?"

"Yes, of course. A fellow can't get far enough away from his store so that one of those fellows won't be on his track. I wouldn't be surprised if that chap would be up here to try and drag me down there to see his fall goods yet. I'm not in any hurry to see fall goods as I know of."

"Do you know whose line this is?"

"No, and I don't care. There's plenty of lines of goods in the market. There can't any one house claim to have them all."

"I suppose, though, there is a best house," said Tobias quietly.

"Oh, I don't know as any one house can be better than all the rest."

"I think that very likely if you could know all about all the houses that cover this territory you would find that some one house is really better than any of the others, but aside from that you will admit that some houses have lines that are ahead of similar lines in other houses. Almost any house has some pretty good advantages to offer in specialties."

"Oh yes," Barlow admitted, "the woods are full of good houses."

"They are hardly as plenty as that. I don't believe you could count up a very large number that you want to buy from. What sticks me is how you know that you don't want any of this man's goods. You didn't even ask what house he represented.

"How do you know that he hasn't got just exactly what you want in fall stuff? He may have some of the best selling goods. He may have some goods that you could use for leaders to outsell the other stores. There's no limit to the things he might have — and you didn't even ask who he was."

"I know what I want and I don't believe any traveling man can tell me more about my business than I know," and Barlow began digging viciously in the lettuce bed.

"I don't know how much you know, but I never yet found any one man who knew it all, though I've found lots of them that thought they did. And you may be surprised to know that I'm willing to bet money that this drummer, I don't know who he is either, can tell you some things about your business that you don't know."

"What, for instance?"

"For one thing, he knows what kinds of goods you are going to have the most demand for the coming fall. His house isn't going ahead and making up big quantities of certain goods without some reason for thinking they are going to sell. You yourself won't know, unless you find out from some outside source, what's going to sell except by waiting to see what the women of the town come in and ask for. I say 'women,' because they are the makers of 'best sellers.'

"And then, too, this drummer no doubt knows something about what the other stores in Hampton are doing or planning to do. Just as like as not he was saving something pretty good to show you because he has heard that you are doing the best business here, and more than likely he is

now on his way to Larry Benjamin's to give him the chance that you threw away.

"Styles are not made or started in Hampton. You can't set a style on anything and even Miss Dolly Dingle can't. The style has got to come from outside and who's going to bring it?

"You may foot the bill but somebody else has got to tell you what to buy. Suppose all the new goods for next fall were to be spread out before you without anyone to say a word about any of them and you were allowed to go ahead and pick out your own line. A pretty lot of stickers you'd land!

"No sir, there can't any man go ahead without looking to right or left or paying any attention to anyone unless he happens to feel just like it, and get very far. You can't act that way with people you want to have buy goods from you, and you can't act that way with people who want to sell you goods.

"Of course a salesman will stand for a certain amount of rudeness just because he needs the money but you know how you feel about giving any special bargains or privileges to a customer who comes in and walks over you rough-shod or who treats you like a necessary evil."

"What do you want me to do?" asked Barlow a little sarcastically, "Shall I run right down

to the store and get down on my knees and beg this traveling man to be so kind as to let me buy something from him?"

"No, because you would be humbling yourself needlessly. He probably wouldn't sell to you now anyway. But I'd turn over a new leaf and see if I couldn't treat other people who are selling goods at least as well as you get treated yourself.

"There was a time perhaps when drummers were a nuisance. They would come in and if the merchant treated them with any consideration at all they would load him up to the ears with anything he would let them send. They were sharpers in many cases but they had to be because the merchants in those times were sharpers too. But there's a different standard today for both sides of the deal. The traveling man who is going to make good has to make a good impression first. Then he has to sell square goods and treat the buyer right.

"Of course there are still some drummers who will stuff your order and who will insist upon selling you whether you want to buy or not and who are regular old-fashioned bores. But there's less and less of 'em. I don't ask you to waste time on a drummer or to visit with one when you haven't the time. And I'd sit on one

that can't act like a gentleman. But you can't tell how to treat one until he has had his chance with you.

"When a man comes in and says he is from So-and-so and has a line of fall samples he would like to show you, treat him like a white man. If you want to visit with him, all well and good, but if you don't, and it isn't profitable to spend much time in aimless visiting, ask him what line he carries. Appoint a time when you will look over the goods and be ready at that time. Give him a chance to say his say about the goods. Hold him down to business as close as you want to and keep him going if your time is short.

"If you can't take time to look at them, ask him to excuse you and if you are polite about it and sincere he has no kick coming and you are justified in ignoring him if he gets mad. If you don't want to buy after seeing the goods, say so and excuse yourself. Any time when a drummer gets peevish while being treated politely and fairly, you cease to be under any obligations to extend him any further courtesies. Let him alone then.

"These persistent, insistent bores are getting scarcer and scarcer and most travelers are willing to admit that a merchant knows whether he wants to buy or not after seeing the goods or

hearing the story about the proposition. Of course you know how to run your own business. I'm not saying you don't. I'm only calling your attention to the fact that you can always learn from a good traveling man."

"Oh, yes, of course," admitted Barlow. "They know a good deal about what's what but there are some that I can't bear at all."

"Well, there are some girls that you can't bear at all, but that hasn't kept you from liking one pretty well, I notice. You can't afford to get sore on a whole class of people just because some of the members of that class are crooked. What would you think of a woman who wouldn't buy anything from any merchant in Hampton just because she found that one of the local merchants was crooked?"

"That's different."

"No, it ain't different either. It's the same darned idea. You're nothing but a drummer yourself only you do all your drumming right here in one place instead of going about the country."

"I'll be good," said Barlow, resting on his hoe. "There's one important item of news that I forgot to tell you. There's going to be a new store in town. A fellow from nobody knows where has bought out Tim Johnson's little shop and

he's going to occupy that whole building and open the same sort of a store I'm running."

Tobias gave an exclamatory whistle. "That *is* news," said he. "I wouldn't wonder if he might give you a run for your money. When is he going to open?"

"Don't know. It was just in the paper last week that Mr. J. C. Flint would open a store in the Tim Johnson stand in a few weeks, and since then the carpenters have been pretty busy at work there, though they keep the curtains down and their mouths shut about what they're doing."

"He's a foxy fellow, isn't he? He's going to have the public's curiosity aroused anyway, and that's what makes an opening of a new store a success. Well, what're you going to do to offset his efforts?"

"Oh, I don't believe he can get my trade away from me. I've been here long enough to have a hold on the people and I'll just keep up a good line of advertising and while he'll get the floaters and 'most everyone will drop in there once in a while, but they'll come back to the old reliable."

"I hope you're a good prophet, my boy, but it wouldn't surprise me any if this Mr. Flint would have you scared before he gets through with you. And what surprises me is that you would turn away a drummer the way you did when there's a

new store getting ready to start. Why, say, you need to be on the lookout for chances to buy right and to get new things more than ever before. You need that drummer a good deal more than he needs you."

It was evident that Barlow thought the Old Storekeeper over-estimated the dangers of the situation. He himself felt secure in his position and had no idea of paying any special attention to the newcomer. On this account he was not worrying over how he might treat a traveling man or what the result of the new competition might turn out to be.

In this he certainly did make a mistake because it does not matter what a new competitor may amount to, as long as there is an element of uncertainty. His plans should be met with your plans. His plans for getting business should be met with plans for holding business. Any new store is sure to develop more or less trade which must come from the old stores. It is up to the old stores to get busy if they expect to hold their own.

At last Barlow finished his lettuce bed and he and Tobias went downtown but the matter of the new store was not referred to again that day.

TENTH TALK

A NEW COMPETITOR OPENS

Charley Morrison had just returned from dinner, and as business was pretty slow that day he sat by his office desk, though he did not boast an office, smoking a good cigar and waiting for either a customer or a visitor.

Although the drug business had not amassed him any fortune, it is probable that he was more glad to see Tobias Jenkins come in for a visit than he would have been to see someone come in with a prescription that would have spoiled the enjoyment of his smoke.

"Hello, Tobias," he greeted the Old Storekeeper. "Never mind buying a cigar. Come over and sit down here and take one on the house. I don't feel like waiting on customers just now."

"The first you know," said Tobias, "you'll be in the same boat as Joel Jenks was when he was running the baseball team last summer. It kept him so busy writing for players and telephoning for games that nobody could ever get waited on

in his store, and one day Mrs. Smith went in and after she had waited till he finished a telephone conversation about some game or other and came out behind the counter, she said, 'I'm sorry to bother you, Mr. Jenks, but I wanted to get some spool cotton.'

"Joel didn't say anything, but he sold her what she wanted and went back and sat down to think it over. He told me afterward that he thought to himself, 'By George, when it gets to where my customers have to apologize for asking me to sell 'em goods I'd better cut out some of this outside business and 'tend to my own a little closer.' He resigned his baseball job right then and there once and for all."

"I'm not in the baseball business," said the druggist. "In my case it's just plain laziness. How's this new store getting along? I wonder if this J. C. Flint fellow is going to get Barlow's trade away from him?"

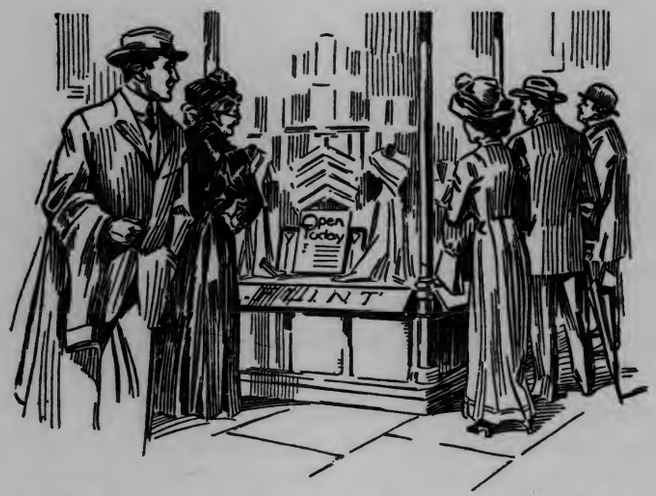
"No, I don't believe so; but between you and me, Charley, he's going to give him a good scare before he gets through with it. Barlow's all right and he's got a good hold on his trade, but he doesn't realize that a man can't let a live competitor like Flint open up a brand new store right in his own line and just a few doors away and

expect to keep all his business without doing something extra to hold it.

"Flint hasn't got much money but he's a hustler. If Barlow lets him get a good start he may get away from him. You know how it was when the boys got up that bicycle race last Fourth of July and gave old Peter Brown ten minutes start just for a joke? Peter fooled 'em and walked off with the prize. You don't want to give anybody any more start on you in a race for trade than you absolutely have to. It's hard enough in these days of competition to get your share of the business when you start out on even terms with the rest.

"Sometimes these dark horses show a lot more speed than anybody thought they could. That's where this early closing plan falls down a good many times. The merchants that think they are the whole show in town agree to shut up at six o'clock every night but Saturday. The little fellow that has just started in around the corner won't go into the pool and they think it doesn't make any difference. But by and by they wake up and find that he's been selling evenings to their customers and treating them so well that they're going there daytimes too."

"Flint has made his store look pretty nice on



"Made his store look pretty nice on the outside."

the outside. It doesn't look much like it used to before he moved in there."

"Yes," continued Tobias, "and that isn't all. He's made it look pretty nice on the inside too. First he tore out a lot of partitions and made it look twice as big as it was, and by using mirrors and putting in some more windows he made it look pretty near twice as big as it is. It pays to make a store look big instead of small and fussy like a two-for-a-cent millinery shop. I don't mean that a big and empty store looks better than a small and full one. It doesn't. But a man ought to make his store look as big as he can without having it look bare in spots like a dog with the mange. You want a nice coating of goods over all the shelves and places where goods are supposed to be."

"Flint has done that alright."

"Yes, Flint has been pretty foxy that way. I don't believe he has a very big stock but he's got it spread out. There are goods everywhere you look, unless some of them are dummies and that doesn't make any great difference because everybody thinks they're goods. Instead of piling away a lot of goods in the back room and giving one item one space on the shelf, he gives that item a whole shelf and makes his stock go as far as he can."

"He's a good advertiser too," interjected Morrison.

"You bet he's a good advertiser, and that's what makes these new fellows dangerous to the man who thinks he's got it all coming his way. There are a lot of merchants who have inherited or bought a store with a good steady trade, and because they haven't had much competition to fight, they think that their customers belong to 'em by divine right. They advertise in a conservative, quiet kind of way, and as long as no real live advertiser comes along they're all right. But some day along comes Johnny Live Wire and opens a store, and while the established chap is laughing at him he's getting busy with the advertising and pulling the business his way.

"That's what's likely to happen to Barlow. He's too cocksure. He's too darned certain that he bought his customers when he bought the store from me. Of course he's held 'em pretty well because nobody's been going after 'em much, but here's where things change. I didn't deliver those customers to him. They just stayed with him because they happened to feel like it. The question is now how much longer are they going to feel like it? I haven't said anything to Barlow. I'm not going to butt in.

"Flint is certainly going about it in the right

way. He hasn't started in by telling a lot of wonderful things that he's going to do, or by saying that he's going to give people the biggest bargains they ever got. No sir, he's just showing 'em by advertising what he can do for 'em right now. What you tell folks you're going to do doesn't get you anything. It's what you really do do that makes the hit.

"Now Flint's making fine use of every window to show good bargains and first-class values. When a new store starts up people are looking for two things there. They are looking for new goods, things they couldn't buy at any of the older stores; and they're looking for better prices on the lines of goods they've been buying. Of course other features appeal to them. A better line of some kind of goods than anybody ever kept in town before makes them sit up and take notice. Better service, more agreeable clerks, quicker delivery, pleasanter store; all these things count, but they are out looking for those two first advantages.

"I'll bet you that Flint knows that. I'll bet you that Barlow never thought of it in just that way. But I'll tell you where Flint has made a big mistake. He's tried to get clerks away from the other stores, and he succeeded in getting some of them too. In that way and in some other

ways he has gone right ahead and made the merchants already in business here mad at him.

"Now take your own case, Charley. Flint doesn't handle any of your kind of goods, but I'll bet a hat that you don't think much of him, and I'll bet another that you don't know just why."

"No, I don't seem to take to him any, and he never did anything to me either. He even comes in here and buys what drugs and stuff in my line he wants, but I don't warm up to him any."

"Well, this is the reason for that. He's absolutely cold blooded. He thinks that business is business, that he can come into Hampton and open a store and by using the good ideas and good sense I've given him credit for, he can get the trade. Of course that's true to a certain extent.

"Business *is* business, but I don't believe that a man can go ahead on the basis of 'Friendship ceases when it comes to a matter of dollars and cents.' If you do business in a town you've got to associate with the people there, and you've got to be a part of them and a booster for the town. If you are one of the merchants in a town you've got to mingle with the others and help them work for the general good. You can't expect to be a high private and yet have everybody willing to

spend their money in your store and for your benefit.

"If you think that you can have a rule outside of the store of every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost, and a rule inside of it of everybody for you, you are going to be fooled badly.

"Flint ought to have called on pretty nearly every merchant in town as soon as he could, and just introduced himself and said that he'd come here to go into business and that even if he was to be a competitor he would try to be a friendly one and hoped that he could help make the town a better business place. If he'd started right out on a handshaking expedition and got in right all along the line he would have found Hampton a lot better place to live in and no worse place to do business in. Nobody would have thought he was fresh and a lot of folks that are now against him would then have been strong for him.

"I expect that the man's a cold blooded fellow naturally. He is selfish and he isn't interested in anybody but himself. But that needn't have made him so foolish that he couldn't see that he was making a bad break to try to steal away other merchant's clerks. Darn a man that will try to get under his competitor's belt that way!

If a clerk from some other store comes and asks you for a job, that puts the responsibility on him and it may be all right to take him. But even then I wouldn't take a competitor's clerk away at the expense of making that competitor mad about it. A fellow can't afford to rile up his competitors unnecessarily. It makes them work a lot harder to hold their trade and get more. The merchants in a town make up a kind of business family, and like any other family it's a good deal better to get along without scraps and jars.

"Flint doesn't see you when he meets you on the street. He isn't near-sighted either. Maybe he's bashful or diffident. I don't know. But whatever it is that makes him that way, it's a fault. He comes in here and buys a few things from you and says it's a nice day, but you don't feel that he cares whether he knows your name or not and the fact that he tries to make up for it when you go into his store doesn't make it any better.

"I like to do business with a pleasant, cordial kind of man, no matter whether I'm buying or selling. If I go into a store where everybody is cheerful and where the clerks aren't afraid to smile and where they don't wait for me to insist upon it before they'll say good morning, I am pretty apt to buy more than in a store

where everybody looks as if there'd been a death in the family that morning. Maybe you don't care so much about people being cheerful as I do, but by George I can't stand a solemn store!"

"Nor I," said Morrison. "I believe this grouch business is all a matter of habit anyway. Why, I had a clerk once who never was known to smile on his job. People used to ask me if he was consumptive, or if he had lost a relative, or what was the matter. I'd try to excuse him because a man's got to stand up for the clerks in his store, but it got to be pretty hard work. I'd try to cheer him up. I'd praise some of his work, or I'd give him a half day extra to go to a ball game. No matter what he did or where he went, no matter how good a time he had, he'd come back with that same funeral face, until I finally told him he'd have to try it on someone else, that I was getting to where I looked like him and my wife wouldn't stand for it."

"Yes, it is a habit, Charley. It's a habit of mind. A man gets to thinking of his troubles if he has any and if he hasn't any he will worry about what he might have and pretty soon it shows in his face and the longer he lets himself run along like that the worse he gets and the

harder it's going to be for him to shake the habit.

"Once while I was in the store things were going kind o' bad for me and I saw I was getting terrible solemn. My wife mentioned it first. Then I watched myself and I saw that I never seemed to be really cheerful, so I thought it over, and about then I read somewhere that the way to get rid of any kind of a fault isn't to keep thinking 'don't do this,' but to think of just the opposite and think 'do do this.' Well, I could see that meant that instead of thinking 'don't be so cussed grouchy,' I ought to be thinking 'Cheer up!' And in that same piece I'd read, it said the best way to start off cheerful was to tell a funny story at the breakfast table every morning. So I got a patent medicine almanac, I came in and you hunted up an old one for me because it was closed season on 'em then, and I learned one of those stories before breakfast every morning. It was kind o' hard at first too, because for three mornings there wasn't a soul at breakfast to tell that story to. My wife didn't get up in time, but I'd made the resolution and you'ld have died to have heard me there in the dining-room telling myself out loud one of those patent medicine almanac chestnuts."

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Morrison. "I supposed you were a natural born story teller. You're always full of them. I never would have thought that was the way you got your story telling habit."

"Yes, sir, that's the way I got my start in life, you might say. It did the business too. It started me out for business feeling perfectly foolish, and I never saw a man who could nurse a grouch when he was feeling absolutely foolish or when he'd left his family laughing over a funny story he'd just told.

"Well, when I'd start for the store feeling cheerful, I'd find that I'd speak cheerfully to every fellow I met, and they'd speak cheerfully to me, so that I'd get to the store in a pretty good mood and every day it lasted a little longer till, the first thing I knew, I'd got rid of that grouch habit and I never let it come back.

"There's something about being cheerful to other folks that is sure to make you cheerful yourself in the end. And without saying anything about what a lot of fun you get out of life, there isn't any question but that cheerfulness pays the biggest kind of dividends. I'd rather have a good, cheerful disposition to start in business with than a capital of $10,000. Yes, I know you think that's a joke, but it isn't.

Cheerfulness has a big money value in business.

"Well, I guess I'll be going along. Will you let me buy some cigars now?"

"No, not yet," said Morrison. "I want to show you something in the advertising line that I've been getting up for my store and I want to get your opinion about it."

"All right, what is it?"

Morrison pulled open a drawer of the desk and drew out a sample of what appeared to be printed advertising matter.

"Here," said he, handing it to Tobias, "is a copy of 'Morrison's Store News.' What do you think of that for advertising?"

The Old Storekeeper took the paper and examined it carefully. It was a four-page paper with pages about 6x9 inches, and it was well printed on good white paper. It had a regular miniature newspaper makeup with the heading and volume and date, etc., all given, and there were two columns to the page. In one of these columns was advertising matter of the store's goods, and in the other various items of local interest interspersed with jokes.

Tobias read part of the contents and then said:

"Charley, that's a mighty good advertisement.

I'll bet it isn't one of these cut and dried, machine-made store papers that you can buy all printed with a place left for putting in your name. It's a regular little newspaper about your store and it's got enough other stuff in it to make people interested and to read it through.

"I believe that for most businesses some kind of a little regular publication of that sort, sent out to a mailing list once a month, or once in two months, is about the best kind of advertising next to the newspapers — and a fellow can use a store paper when he couldn't use the newspapers.

"Why, some of the country stores, in places where they don't have any local paper, use the store paper altogether and they get out some pretty big ones too. You keep up that scheme, Charley, and you'll find it's a good one. There isn't much use of starting in unless you are going to stick to it, any more than there's any use in starting in with any kind of advertising and then stopping just as you get nicely under way.

"You just begin to get the best results from a store paper kind of an advertisement after people get to where they expect it and look for it and maybe come in and kick if you forgot to send them one.

"I've seen little bits of store publications that

would fit into a common business envelope and they were good ones too. It isn't size that counts in that kind of advertising. It's the quality. Leave the patent insides to some other fellow and fill your paper with real newsy original matter that you write yourself, or get someone to write about your store.

"Don't forget to send me one of those whenever you get one out. I'm going to take this home and read it carefully later. No, don't give me any more cigars. I'm going to buy a quarter's worth in spite of you. Good day! You will soon make a first-class editor sure."

ELEVENTH TALK

A CUSTOMER'S POINT OF VIEW

The Flint store continued to prosper in spite of the personal unpopularity of its proprietor. The store was new and it had new goods and it certainly used live methods of advertising and selling them. These facts were the reasons for its business development.

It drew a good deal of business from Barlow and in addition to this, as is always the case, the new competition stimulated Larry Benjamin and the other local merchants to greater endeavor and the result was that Barlow began to get a little scared.

Confident at the outset that the new man could not get his trade away from him, he found that he was mistaken. The new man could get it. Any new store can get some business. Any store opened for business in the retail section of a town is certain to do some business, no matter what its methods or its stock.

For a week or so Barlow hoped that Tobias

would come in and open the subject so that he could ask him what to do without first having to admit that he had not taken the proper steps to meet his new competition, but the Old Storekeeper adhered to his resolution not to interfere and finally his successor came out and called him in one day as he was going past.

"Mr. Jenkins!" he called, "I want to talk to you. Come in and have a chair for a while."

"What's the matter? Do you want to give me some good advice about how to make garden, or are you going to show me a sample of the biggest radishes in town?"

"No, nothing about gardening. I've about given that up lately. I've had so much else on my mind."

They walked back through the store to the office and when Tobias was seated, Barlow asked,

"What am I going to do to keep this man Flint from getting my trade away from me? I know he has surprised me. I said he couldn't do it, but I'm ready to admit that I didn't know what I was talking about, so you needn't rub that in any."

"He's kind o' getting under your belt, is he? Well, I don't think you need to worry about it because I don't believe he's going to close up your store or any of the others, but I'd get busy

if I were you. First, I want to ask where is Dolly Dingle? I see you've got a young fellow that I don't know taking care of her counter."

"Well, you see," explained Barlow hesitatingly, "since we are going to be married I thought she didn't need to work in the store, so I got someone to take her place and she's gone on a visit for a while."

"Hadn't you heard that it isn't a first class time to swap horses when you're crossing a stream?"

"Well, I didn't suppose it would make any difference."

"Oh, that isn't what's getting your trade away from you, not that entirely, but if I was bothered with some extra hot competition for a while I don't believe I'd pick out that time to let old clerks go and put new ones that folks don't know on the job. Of course that's only one of the little things that makes a difference, but in this case it isn't such a little thing either. There's Billie Henry who worked in your grocery department and Flint has hired him to get out and take orders and deliver the goods. Those two clerks gone out of your force and replaced with new ones don't help any to hold your trade.

"I've been watching this Flint and the rest of your fellow merchants lately and wondering

"He has popular priced novelties in every line."

what would happen with competition hotter and I've noticed that things were warming up considerable. I asked my wife yesterday what the women thought of the new store and I got some ideas from her about how the customers look at the proposition.

"She says that one reason why Flint's store is so popular is that he's got the very newest things. Of course your store and the other stores here in town are buying new goods all the while and you get some of the latest things in the market, but she says that this fellow has a big line of novelty goods that people buy because they never had them before and they don't cost much money. His store is more like a city store in that way. Whenever you go in you always see something that you want and that you can afford to buy.

"He has the popular priced novelties in every line he carries and a whole lot of these things are goods that the Hampton folks didn't know were made at all. And my wife says that the reason he's got these goods is because he's been in the city and gone around to all the different wholesale and retail stores and made 'em show him what was new. I asked her if she didn't think that the other stores here kept up to date pretty well but she didn't seem to think so. She

said 'Oh yes, of course they buy new goods once in a while from the agents, but the new goods aren't so very different from the old ones. 'Why,' she said, 'I'll bet that John Barlow or Larry Benjamin either don't go to the city oftener than once a year and then they just go and buy the same things they'd buy if they stayed home and let a drummer bring samples to them. They don't go around any.'

"And I don't know but she's some right too. Just going down to the city and going in and buying a line of stuff from the same old house year after year doesn't help a fellow to get wise on novelties. He's got to find 'em just the same as a woman would find 'em by shopping around. Of course that's hard work and it doesn't leave a man in good shape to enjoy the theatre at night but it gets him a darned sight more salable goods. If a customer thinks a store has some new goods that he or she hasn't seen before, that means a visit to the store even if there isn't anything special needed at that time.

"Why, I know myself, and you do too, that if you see that Charley Morrison has got in a new line of pipes or tobaccos, you want to go in the first thing and look them over. Maybe you don't want any pipe and maybe you've got slathers and oodles of tobacco but you want to

see what's new and you'll probably buy some before you get out.

"I expect a woman is the same way only more so about the things she is interested in in a store, things for the house, things to eat, or things to wear, especially those last!

"Then another thing my wife called my attention to was that this foxy Flint has gone and got in his store clerks that know the people here and that the people know. Some of those clerks don't know but precious little about the goods, but they know the folks and Flint has sense enough to tell 'em that just as soon as a customer asks about something they don't know about, they're to call him or someone that does know.

"That fixes it so that the customers don't care so much about what sort of a chap Flint is himself as long as they get waited on by some one they know. And he makes every one of those clerks call the customers by name, by their actual name, mind you. They musn't just say 'Good morning Madam,' or 'yes sir' or 'yes ma'am,' they must say 'Good morning, Mrs. Jones,' and 'Yes, Mrs. Jones.' And they have to say it too. If they don't know a person's name, it's up to them to find it out if they can so they'll know it next time, and Flint himself is Johnny right

on the spot all the while. He knows who's who in his store. And every customer that comes in is written down in a mailing list and gets advertising fired at 'em right away.

"You think this isn't telling you how to hold your trade or how to get it back, but it is just the same. The things that will draw trade one way will draw it the other. You made the mistake of your life in letting Miss Dingle go vacationing now, marry or no marry. You need her in your business and my advice to you is to write to her and ask her to come back and get you out of the hole, because if you don't get busy you won't have business enough to support her after you get her. Of course you ought to have kept Billie Henry. You ought to have paid him enough so he wouldn't have gone to Flint's. He needs the money and he was at liberty to change and while I wouldn't advise you in the matter, I'm not saying that it wouldn't be fair for you to see the other merchants that Flint stole clerks from and all of you go after the clerks and get them back in a bunch. Mind you, I don't advise that. I just mention it. And if you get them, get them on a written contract to stay a definite length of time.

"Another thing my wife said was that when you go into Flint's you get waited on right away,

or else they tell you how long it will be before they can wait on you. In most stores you go in and stand around with nothing but a nod from a busy clerk and you can guess at the number of people who are ahead of you and how much they're going to buy and you don't know how long you may have to wait. Perhaps you haven't much time to spare and you might prefer to come in again later or to go somewhere else for what you want. Well, she says that there someone is always ready to tell you that they'll wait on you in five minutes, or that it will be ten minutes before they can see you, as the case may be. They ask you to sit down and wait and if you don't think you can wait that long, nobody gets sore about it or tries to tie you fast to a post so you can't get out with your money.

"It seems to me that the whole thing in a nutshell is simply that they take a lot of pains to be polite to their customers and to make them feel comfortable. In some stores their motto is 'We want your money' and it sticks out all over the people and the place just as plain as if they had it printed on framed cards hung up around. And that's all they do want too. You feel that as soon as they've got it you can't 'beat it' too soon. Of course they want you to come back,

when you get more money, but they don't take any pains to make you want to come.

"When I go into a store where they evidently don't want anything of me but my money, I don't go away hoping to see them again soon. Not much! I want the man who sells me goods in a store, or anywhere else, to act as if he could think in some terms beside just dollars and cents. It's all right for a clerk to be looking out for his employer's interest all the time, but that ought to mean that he's trying to make a satisfied customer out of me. Nobody who knows anything about business tries any more to run a store on the one time customer plan.

"Everybody used to advertise 'No trouble to show goods.' Once in a while you see that now. But the stores that advertised that were just as likely as any others to get mad if a customer came in and after looking at the whole line went away without buying anything.

"I'll say this much for you, John, you always did insist that the customer who didn't buy anything must be treated just as well as the one who bought a lot of stuff. Well, that counts in your favor. You bear on hard on that now because it's a strong feature. I don't know of anything I like about a store better than just that. Advertise that and feature it and impress it upon the

minds of the public. Tell them that you want them to come to your store when they're out looking and that you don't care a continental whether they buy anything or not. Of course you do care and of course they know that you would rather have them buy, but if you can treat them as if they were free to do as they liked about it and nobody get grouchy, then you'll get their patronage.

"Of course some customers don't care two straws. They'd as soon have the clerk get mad over their not buying as to have him smile but those people are about as scarce as hen's teeth and even they won't mind if the clerk is polite when they don't spend their money.

"Men are particularly backward about going in and looking things over. A man just naturally seems to hate to go into a store and ask to see the different kinds of anything. He wants to blow in with an air of assurance and say 'Give me two dollars' worth of this or that' and not have to appear to care what the price is or to seem ignorant in any way. But when he doesn't know, which is a good deal of the time, he has got to ask questions, and then he wants to go to a store where they'll treat him well and let him down easy if he doesn't buy. When he finds the store that does business in that way, he is going

to drop in there for everything he wants in their line.

"I would advise you, or anybody who finds himself up against a new line of hot competition, to increase his advertising expense, to use bigger space and to get up better window displays and to put on a few special sales. This new store is getting business with bargains. You give some bargains too. Spend a little money in giving people some values that will show them that no new store can give better values than the old established firm.

"Get your trade journals out and go through the advertising pages of them and see what there is that's new that you get to feature and see too what's new in fixtures that will help you to display your goods better than the other fellow shows his. I don't believe you give more than half enough attention to your trade journals anyway. I don't know how many you get but you ought to have one for every line of goods you carry. I know a druggist who made a success of his business who subscribed for three drug trade papers, a tobacco trade paper, a stationery journal and one for the confectionery line. It didn't cost him more than a few dollars every year and he got no end of good ideas out of them, and their advertising pages kept him sup-

plied with new goods all the time. He was an up to date live merchant.

"I know another fellow who tried to run a department store. He had a shoe, a clothing, a grocery, a dry goods and one or two other departments and he didn't take a single trade paper. He's out of business now. The sheriff put on the only good sale the store ever had. Don't make any mistake about this trade paper business. You may think you can't afford to take 'em all, but I tell you you can't afford not to take all you can possibly get time to read. And if you can't read them yourself, let the clerks read them and it will do you almost as much good. I had a talk with Henry Foss the other day right along this same line. I want to impress it on you too.

"There are some kinds of economy that aren't economy at all and this going without trade journals is one of them. It's a kind of 'save at the spigot and waste at the bung' economy. The dealer out here in the smaller towns can't find any better way of keeping up to date between trips to the market than to read plenty of trade papers. And I'm not sure but that he can keep up to date about as well from the trade papers alone as from the trips to the city. Think of all the money and brains that are being put into these journals all over the country in all lines!

The fellows behind these papers know what they are about. They're right close to the people who do the big advertising and make the big sellers sell.

"And a good trade paper will tell a man pretty nearly anything he wants to know.

"I'm not going to ask you what papers you take because I don't believe you take many and I don't want to embarrass you, but you get busy and subscribe for some more of them and if you don't get some ideas out of them that will help you to trim that Flint chap, I'll pay for the best suit of clothes you can buy in town."

The Old Storekeeper got up and stretched himself and reached for his hat.

"I'm much obliged to you for your talk," said Barlow. "You haven't jumped on me as hard as you might have done and I appreciate your letting me down easy. I think I'll just take up your advice. Come in again."

"Oh, I'll do that all right; don't worry." And Tobias went out whistling his favorite tune.

TWELFTH TALK

HOW TO HAVE GOOD CLERKS

It was about this time that the business men of Hampton decided to form an organization for the general good of the business of the town.

They called this "The Enterprise Club" and they planned to meet regularly once a month in an informal way and have a sort of smoker with a talk on some business subject by some live business man.

A local business men's association of some sort is a necessity in every town if it expects to hold its own against the outside influences that are all the while being brought to bear to get away the business of its citizens.

It is easier nowadays to buy away from home than it ever was before. Buying by mail has been facilitated in every way and the automobile makes it easy for a good many people in the smaller place to get to the larger town to do their important buying.

The Enterprise Club was formed with the hope that it would bring the merchants together so that they would present a united front to the outside world. It was expected that there would be business carnivals, business shows and bargain weeks and many other schemes for drawing trade to Hampton.

While Tobias Jenkins was not a merchant, still he was actively interested in the town's business matters and he was glad to become a member of the club and help it along in every possible way. Any such club will often find it an advantage to have in its ranks others than merely the town's merchants.

Every member should and will feel the importance of loyalty to the home merchants and each one will feel in duty bound to do all the buying at home that is possible.

The first meeting at which there was to be a speech or talk came not long after the events of our last chapter and Tobias was asked to address the club upon the subject of handling clerks.

He demurred at making any kind of a speech as he was no public speaker but he finally consented to talk to them in an informal kind of way if they would let him sit down and smoke with them while he talked. To this they con-

sented and thus he became in his own way the "speaker of the evening."

"Your president," said he, "asked me if I wouldn't say something about clerks and I very foolishly said I would. Now, there's a good deal that can be said about them and about some of them, the less said, the better. I never had much trouble getting along with the boys and they never had much trouble getting along with me — if they had any idea of being on the square.

"At first when I wanted a clerk, I used to keep thinking, 'I wonder if I can get the sort of a man I want.' Then somehow it just happened to pop into my head 'I wonder if I am the sort of a man a good clerk wants to work for.' That idea set me thinking a good deal and the result was that I made up my mind that there's as much in being a good boss as there is in being a good clerk.

"I tried to think of cases where a bad boss had good clerks and I couldn't think of any, unless it might be one or two where the clerk had quit as soon as he found out he wasn't working for the right kind of a man. And if you yourselves will take notice you will find that the only kind of clerk that will stay with a poor merchant is a poor clerk.

"The good clerk is looking for a chance to bet-

ter himself. He has ambitions. He wants to get to be something more than a mere clerk. He wants some day to be his own boss and have a store of his own, and if he is working for a man who doesn't know how to run a store, he'll have sense enough to realize that he can't learn there.

"Some employers think they don't want a clerk who is planning to go into business for himself. They're afraid he'll get to be a competitor and steal all of their methods and take their customers with him. Well, if a man isn't willing to take any chances at all in business, he'd better stay out of it. If he'd rather have poor clerks just so they won't get to be his competitors, let him have them. But it's a mistake to look at it in that way. Get the ambitious young men who want to accomplish something and take pains to teach them as much as they can learn about the business. The more ambition they have to get into business, the better help they will be. You can't keep a man from starting out for himself just by refusing to help him learn the business. He's sure to do you more harm ignorant behind your own counter than he'd do behind his own later.

"You've got to take an interest in your clerks if you expect them to take much interest in you. You can't expect him to work his head off to

make your business a success if you won't turn over your hand to help him to succeed.

"And a clerk needs appreciation too. It's all very well to say that a clerk's pay is what he should get for his work and that flattery won't get you anything from him. Nevertheless he likes to be told he is doing well. You like it yourselves. Why, the money a man gets for his work isn't really the important thing. He wants people to know that he's done well, that he's amounted to something. You tell your clerks so when you notice they are making good and they'll work twice as hard to keep on improving. Flattery may not be wages, but it sure makes the wages look bigger.

"A merchant has a moral responsibility too in connection with his clerks. It's up to him to know something about what kind of a fellow that clerk is outside of store hours and it's up to him to set him an example that it won't hurt him to follow. If the clerk has any ideas at all, one of them is pretty apt to be that his boss is a pretty good example for him to follow if he wants to get to be his own merchant some day.

"You know where the boy would land that followed the example of some employers. Employers who have themselves made money and who apparently are successful business men, are

"Setting their clerks an example of fast living."

setting their clerks an example of fast living that will ruin the youngsters in a short time, no matter what it may do to the employers who perhaps kept sober till they got their business built.

"I believe in a man knowing what his clerks are doing outside of business hours and calling them for it if they get sporty. The clerk who won't appreciate such an interest on the part of his employer, who says that it isn't any of the boss's business what he does outside of the store, is wrong and going wrong. If he's right, and if he behaves himself out of the store, he won't care if his boss does know what he does.

"There's more than the reason of moral responsibility for this. There is good business sense in it. Who wants to trust his money in the hands of a man who spends his nights gambling? Who wants part of his customers kept away from his store because he has a clerk whom women don't want to do business with? I tell you, it *is* a man's business what his clerks do wherever they are. It isn't necessary for him to be offensive in interesting himself in their affairs. He needn't and he shouldn't be snooping around and spying on them. He ought to be perfectly frank about it and talk over that sort of thing with a clerk just as he'd talk over the quality of a new arrival of goods.

"And here's another thing; don't jump on the clerks for mistakes. A man who never makes mistakes doesn't count for very much and you and I make them in business pretty nearly every day. We can't help it. But it doesn't make us feel any better to be cussed for it. When a mistake has been made, it's been made. The thing to do is to prevent its being made again and get out of it this time as well as possible.

"If a man can't keep his temper with his help when they do things wrong, they'll be all the more apt to do them wrong. It makes a man nervous and more likely to do a thing wrong if he knows that somebody is watching him all the time with a temper already to fly to pieces the minute everything isn't just exactly right.

"I don't hold any brief for the 'easy boss' who lets mistakes slip by without a word and takes everything as it comes. He won't help his clerks to get any better, but I want to condemn the Simon Legree sort of a chap who can't stand it to have a little authority without abusing it.

"There are some kinds of clerks a man never ought to hire at all. It will save him trouble and time and money to let them work for somebody else. One of these is the man who drinks. I don't care how much or how little he uses booze, you never know what he is going to do. Marry-

ing a man to reform him and hiring him in the hope of reforming him are a good deal alike. If you want to reform partial or total drunkards, that's a good idea and I approve of it, but I don't think the way, or even one of the ways of doing it is to hire them to work in your store.

"Booze and business won't any more mix than oil and water and any young fellow who doesn't believe that has just that much more to learn and if he will learn it from somebody else's experience instead of from his own, he'll be money and a lot more things ahead in the end.

"Then there's the quick tempered chap, the fellow who just can't help going right up in the air if a customer insinuates that he isn't telling the exact truth or if the boss drops him a friendly hint on some of his shortcomings. You may possibly get along with such a chap by handling him with gloves, but unless you're pretty even tempered yourself and can keep your mouth shut when he treats you with scant politeness, better let him pass on to someone else.

"The clerk with poor health you can do as you like about. If you are of a charitable nature and his illness isn't contagious, take him on and let him work when he can and make up your mind to get along without him when he can't. The average human being is sick enough of the

time, and calls for enough days off for the ordinary run of life's ailments without your picking out a fellow who is below the physical average.

"The cigarette fiend is another bad bargain. I don't care if you run a tobacco store and want a man to go behind the cigarette counter; you don't want a fellow who looks dirty and cigaretty. He won't be any better advertisement for the cigarette business than a drunkard is for a saloon.

"Use care in picking out clerks and you won't have to use as much care in watching them afterward or as much tact in getting rid of them. An ounce of prevention in such a deal is worth many pounds of cure.

"The way a man treats his clerks makes all the difference in the world with the kind of service he will get out of them. The fellow who makes it plain right at the outset that they are his employés and that all they need expect from him is their wages, will get their time and they will do what they are told to do, but they will be working for their own interests and doing as little as they can instead of feeling that the store is theirs and that its success is their success.

"I believe in giving help a financial interest in the growth and development of the business. It's a good plan if it's a stock company to give

them a piece of the stock for Christmas or at the end of each year of their time with the store. A man who has stock in a store, if he is any good at all, will not be losing many chances to boost that store's trade. He will be for his employer first, last and all the time.

"Another good plan is to give a clerk the first of January a certain percentage of the net gain in business for the year. Clerks who are going to get a part of the business gain are going to do all they can to make that gain something worth while.

"Such plans identify the clerk with the store and make him a part of it. He acts as if he was interested. He doesn't stand with his mouth shut while customers walk out because they needed a little help in getting the right goods.

"When you get a clerk who makes the store *his* store, who comes to you regularly with suggestions for improvements in store or stock, who is always on his job on time and always polite and interested, hang onto that clerk. Don't let anybody hire him away from you by offering him more money because he is worth more money to you than to almost anybody else. If he is worth a raise, raise him and don't wait for him to insist upon it either. One good clerk helps to draw others. He helps to draw a good class of trade.

He helps in every way that the business needs help.

"It's better to hire a good man and pay him more than you can afford to pay than to hire a poor man and pay him anything.

"One of the most important things to teach a clerk is salesmanship. Everyone of you merchants is a more or less good salesman. You have all had a good deal of experience. You know some things about selling goods that your clerks don't know. Do you take pains to teach them what you know? You ought to talk over with them the matter of salesmanship and find out how much they know about the theory of it as well as about the practice.

"There are lots of good little books on salesmanship that it will pay you to put into the hand of the clerks. I believe in giving employés of all sorts plenty of good business literature and letting them get the theory as well as the practice of selling goods.

"Any man who has two or three or more clerks will make money by getting them interested in scientific salesmanship. The average clerk thinks little or nothing about such things. He goes into a store and there he sells goods and learns what he happens to learn by experience. He notices that some kinds of talk get

more buyers than other kinds and he takes up those lines of argument. But he doesn't know that by studying into the thing further he could find out why each customer who buys does so and why each one who does not buy does that way.

"Reasons for things of that kind are important. When a man dressing a window puts in a bright red display he notices that he sells a lot of goods of the kind he had exhibited. He figures that he had a good bargain there or that the arrangement was catchy, or something else. He knows that the window was a red one and he knows that it sold goods but he may not know that it sold the goods because it was a red window. If he had gone into the theory of the thing and found that red will attract the attention of the eye quicker than any other color, he might have had the key to other successful windows. I tell you gentlemen, it pays to get onto the theory of things. Everybody looks for scientific reasons nowadays.

"Little things in salesmanship are mighty important. A fastidious customer may be sent away to make an important purchase somewhere else just because the clerk's finger nails were dirty in your store. You think that's getting it down pretty fine, but it's true. A clerk with a

bad breath can't talk across the counter to me. I'll beat it every time. Soiled linen always looks like cheap help and a cheap store too. Anything that takes away from the class of the store, takes away from its cash receipts. People *will* spend their money where they please and they don't very often please to spend it where there is anything unpleasant encountered in the matter of clerk or employer."

This concluded the talk and after everyone had thanked Tobias for his good, plain advice, the meeting broke up. As the members went out Barlow walked along with Tobias and said,

"Come down to the store to-morrow. I want to talk some things over with you. I can't seem to get my affairs going right. In fact everything is all going wrong."

"What's the matter?"

"I'm not going to tell you anything about it to-night, but I've got to get started pretty soon on the right road or I don't know what I'll do."

Tobias agreed to be on hand early in the morning and bade him good night.

THIRTEENTH TALK

GETTING THE BUSINESS BACK

Promptly at eight o'clock the morning after the meeting of the business organization, Tobias walked briskly into Barlow's store and going back to where the proprietor sat at his desk, he drew a chair up and asked,

"Well, son, what's the trouble? How can I help you?"

"It's just this," said Barlow, going into the matter without delay. "That Flint store, or somebody, is getting my business away too fast. I'm running behind. I can't keep my help busy and my funds are a little short too. I don't want to discharge anybody if I can help it because that will give the situation away to the public."

"Has Dolly Dingle come back?" asked Tobias.

"No, and she won't. I'm afraid that's all off, Mr. Jenkins. I wrote and told her the trouble and said I wished she would come back and help me out and we'd keep our engagement quiet for

a little while. I got a letter right away saying that she had supposed I was competent to manage my affairs and keep my store running and that if I was ashamed to have my engagement known, it better be ended before it was too late, so she broke it right off."

"Do you know what's the trouble?" asked Tobias. "You put it wrong end to in the letter. You've got to remember that you can't put things in a letter just as you'd say 'em. You've got to be mighty careful and see that they read so that they give just the meaning you want 'em to give. That's particularly important in business letters. All of these times when a merchant gets hot at the wholesaler or when the manufacturer gets mad at the merchant are just because of some fool mistake of a careless letter writer.

"If you'd seen Dolly and talked this over with her, there wouldn't have been any misunderstanding. But that's neither here nor there as far as I'm concerned. I'm not going to offer advice in anybody's love affairs. I'll tell you what you're going to do. You're all going to pieces and you're going to take a vacation."

"But how can I take a vacation now of all times when my business is going down hill and everything is at loose ends?"

"I'll tell you. You aren't in any shape to get

a business back on its feet. You're just like an automobile stuck in a mud-hole; the harder it tries to get out, the deeper it digs itself in. Now you show me how things stand, explain your books to me, then pack your grip and dig out. I don't care where you go, but go somewhere and stay a couple of months. I'm going to take over this business myself for that long and have some fun. I've just been wishing I could get a chance to get into a store for a while again and see what I could do."

"You're mighty kind, Mr. Jenkins, but I couldn't do that. It's asking too much of you and then I wouldn't be easy a day while I was away."

"I don't care whether you're easy while you're away or not. I'll guarantee that you'll be easy when you come back. That ought to be worth something. Now come on and show me about things. Everything that I don't need to know, leave out."

After some more argument Barlow finally consented to do as Tobias asked him to do and they spent the day in getting the Old Storekeeper acquainted with the details of the business situation.

The next morning Barlow left town and it was announced that the work of managing his in-

creasing business had made it necessary for him to take a rest for a couple of months. Tobias took matters in hand.

The first thing he did was to consider well what might be done right away to stop the trade that was gradually drifting away and draw back that which had gone.

His first consideration was given to that greatest of all business bringers, the premium scheme.

The different variations of this plan, like any other, have some objections. But the fact that a plan is not perfectly adapted to all cases is no reason for condemning it wholesale. There are exceptions to all rules.

. . . . . .

The two months elapsed and aside from an occasional postal card, Tobias had heard nothing from Barlow. He in turn had sent no information regarding the store and the business except an occasional statement to the effect that everything was all right and that he was to stay his two months out.

The Old Storekeeper sat at the desk one evening making out a set of figures showing the business of the two months past. It was after closing time and the clerks had gone home. The whistle of the evening train from the south blew just as Tobias tilted back in his chair and gave

a sigh of satisfaction, lit a fresh cigar and proceeded to wait for Barlow's coming for he had received a telegram saying that he would be in on that train. He had not overstayed his leave of absence by so much as a single day.

In a short time the door opened and the young proprietor rushed in looking brown and rugged and full of energy. He shouted a greeting to Tobias and grasped his hands and pumped them up and down until the older man had to call for mercy.

"Say, boy, you're strong and ambitious. What the dickens have you been doing — taking somebody's elixir of life? Come into your office and sit down!"

"By George! It seems good to get back again, Mr. Jenkins. How's everything? Break it to me gently if the rest of my business has been stolen away. Say, I've got more ideas in my head about ways for making a store do business than I could tell you in a week. I've been putting in time finding out things since I left you. I haven't been loafing around all these weeks, not by a long shot. But first, go ahead and let me know what you've been doing here. You look as if you'd enjoyed it at that."

"I have enjoyed it, John. I've had the time of my life and I'm proud to say I've made good.

Now, if you've got time to listen, I'll tell you how I did it. First, here are the figures of the receipts for the two months as compared with the corresponding time last year. You see, there was a big deficiency at first and it was a month before I got up even and now we're running 'way ahead.

"What I did was to go into the premium business. I don't know whether you approve of it or not and that's one reason why I wanted you out of the way. I could see that the case called for desperate medicine at once.

"Flint had begun giving rebate checks that were good for a cash discount on every ten dollars' worth. Larry Benjamin was giving a cash discount on every purchase of ten dollars' worth. We, or rather, you, hadn't been doing anything to meet this.

"You'd never used the check printing part of your cash register to any advantage." (Barlow had chosen a cash register system for his store and installed it during the winter.) "The checks had no value and naturally nobody took 'em. They were wasted. I sent to the manufacturer and got a new electro reading, 'This check is good for a premium. Ask the man!' Then I sat down and ordered from a big mail order jobber, a lot of cut glass; brassware like

jardinieres, fern dishes, candlesticks, etc.; Rogers plated silverware such as teaspoons, knives and forks, in standard pattern.

"In the newspapers and by circulars and with posters in the store, see, there's one of them! I advertised that cash register checks would be given with all cash purchases of all kinds and that these checks would be redeemed in certain premiums.

"By that time the premiums were here and displayed in that big showcase over there. A sample of each kind was put in the case and out in the back room duplicates were arranged in labelled spaces and all wrapped ready to deliver. I made people come for their premiums of course. It was one of the rules, or rather it *is* one, for the plan is still at work, that nobody could send for the premium or have it sent to them. The person wanting it had to come for it, at least the person who came for it had to have the checks and make the deal. That gave us a chance to get them interested in continuing to save the checks and it made it probable that they would make a purchase while in the store after the premium. On each premium we put a good, plain card telling how many dollars' worth of checks it took to get it.

"For instance, we figured that the premiums

"I advertised that cash register checks would be redeemed in premiums."

were worth to the customer eight or ten per cent of the checks it took to get them. These premiums cost me something less than five per cent, some of them not more than three. One of the premiums that we give for five dollars in checks (and that is the lowest figure that gets anything) is a Rogers teaspoon in that vintage pattern that they advertise in the magazines. It costs $2.41 per dozen. There is a line of Japanese chinaware too that is inexpensive and it gets the women to looking every time.

"Why, there isn't a case of goods in the store that attracts the attention that premium case attracts. I keep a girl behind it all the time, showing up the premiums and explaining the plan. And we take just as much pains in helping a customer choose a premium as if she were buying something.

"Of course there haven't been a lot of premium goods taken out yet because people are just beginning to get enough checks to be entitled to them. Quite a lot of the cheaper ones have gone and they have helped to advertise the plan. It always seems at first to a customer as if she would never get checks enough to win a premium, but once get them started and they find that it counts up pretty fast.

"You might think that this premium thing

"We take pains in helping a customer choose a premium."

wouldn't be as good by quite a lot as the cash discount or the rebate plan of those other fellows. Well, it isn't as good if the customer only knew it, but there never was a time when people wouldn't save checks to get a premium a good deal sooner than they would bother to take a cash discount. A cash rebate doesn't look particularly good to anyone unless they get it right along with the goods. They can't see it. They want to save to get something that they can see. And after I'd had both those biggest windows filled with premiums for a few days, you'd have laughed in your sleeve to see the people coming back here that had been trying trading at Flint's. Why, if Flint's got any business left I don't know where he's getting it.

"Of course this premium trade is all cash trade and the plan is going to cut out pretty near all of your credit business in a little while. That's where your cash register is getting in its fine work with the checks. There aren't very many people looking for credit now. When a woman can see a good piece of cut glass or some other nice thing that she can get free by paying spot cash for her goods, she isn't going to run a charge account and lose that premium, not if she's a careful and economical housekeeper anyway.

"This kind of a premium plan is a good ways ahead of trading stamps or any other scheme where you have to pay some outside parties a profit on the game. A man can just as well get up his own plan and save that much money and then people have to come to his store for their premiums and they have to do all their trading there to get them. They can't get them by buying anywhere else the same kind of goods in a different kind of a store.

"Of course you may not want to run this scheme forever and I've got to admit that it's not an easy matter to close up the plan. People will bother you with wanting premiums after you've stopped giving them and when you stop there will be a lot of checks to be redeemed on some kind of a basis, but I took all this into consideration when I started the plan. Your store has to have something to get the trade back and I knew this would do it. I've advertised these premiums just as I'd advertise any line of goods that you might want to sell. I had to get quick results so I bore on hard and the results, I guess, justify me in doing it."

"They certainly do," broke in Barlow. "Why I had no idea that any such results could be got with any kind of a scheme. I'm ready

to admit that I don't know it all. But I've learned some things while I've been out around. It certainly does a man a lot of good to see what merchants are doing in other towns and cities. You can sit here at home and think about your business all you want to but there are lots of things, no end of them, that you'll never think of at all."

"You're dead right on that, John. I sometimes wonder how these stay-at-home fellows develop as much business as they do. I don't believe in a man gadding about the country and leaving his business ordinarily, but there are times when he has to get out of the rut. If a fellow sticks right close and never goes anywhere or sees anything he may get the theory of the new business ideas but he won't have the big advantage of seeing them in use. And then when he gets out he has a chance to meet live fellows and talk with them, and even if they don't give you so many new ideas, they give you new points of view and they set your brain working along a new line and you figure out new ideas for yourself.

"That's one reason why a man ought to join an association in his line of business and in his section of the country. Did you ever notice how

few members there are in the meetings of the associations compared with the number of stay-at-homes?

"A whole lot of fellows think the association don't amount to anything and don't do any good. They're all wrong. The associations do all kinds of good in a general way. They look after legislation and they help raise the standard of business. They may be run by cliques as a lot of men say they are, but who cares? Somebody has to run an association just as there has to be an organization in politics, and when you get right down to brass tacks, the fellows who are doing the kicking aren't generally men who could take hold and do very good work on the job themselves. As far as I've noticed the men who do the work get little enough out of it in the way of glory or money for the time they use up. As far as I'm concerned, I'd a thousand times rather have somebody else run the thing than to have to run it myself.

"If all these knockers would stop asking what the association has done for them and ask themselves what they ever did for their association, it might have the effect of starting 'em thinking along the right line.

"Suppose the association hasn't accomplished any big thing that helped your business, if you

have gone to the meetings, you have got enough benefit to pay you a hundred times for all it cost — and you've probably had a darned good time as well. If you haven't gone to the meetings, how can you complain about not getting any benefits? What's worth having is generally worth going after.

"How can a man go to a meeting where there are from a dozen to a hundred other men who are engaged in the same business, without getting some ideas if he talks to the rest of them about the business at all? He can't. If he just goes and keeps his mouth shut, if his ears are open he is going to find out some things worth knowing. And a fellow never knows where or when he may pick up a single good idea that will be worth a hundred dollars or several hundred to him as a business getter.

"Now, you've been out roaming around and you've learned a good many things and a lot of them may never prove of any value to you, but there is probably some one good idea in the lot that will bring you in some day several times as much money as this trip has cost you.

"I'm not going to talk to you all night. Here's the key to your store. Here's your cash book and your bank book and you'll find everything else where you left it. There's just one ques-

tion I want to ask and that's really none of my business. Did you see Dolly Dingle?"

"No, I didn't. I've never even written her since I told you what she wrote to me."

"Good," said the older man. "You have got some sense after all. Now get back into the harness and after a week or two, just run down to wherever she is and straighten that little matter out and bring her back with you and marry her. Then she'll have to help you about running the store because she'll want to do it. Come on, let's go home. I'm tired and I'll bet you are too."

FOURTEENTH TALK

USING THE WINDOWS

"Hello, Jerry!" exclaimed the Old Storekeeper as he walked into Barlow's store one morning and found Jerry Barnard standing near the front intently examining the windows.

"Good morning, Mr. Jenkins," responded the clerk. "I'm just wondering if it wouldn't pay me to study up the window dressing business, kind of make a specialty of it, you know. I don't know as I could make much right here in Hampton as a window dresser but after I got to be expert I could get a good job somewhere, couldn't I?"

"I think you could, Jerry. I notice your displays are always well arranged and I guess you've got some talent along that line. I'm not so sure that Barlow couldn't afford to pay you well for a better knowledge of that kind of work. Most merchants could afford to spend more money to have their windows right if they realized how valuable they are.

"Now, you know, the trade papers are all the while telling how to make window displays and they are all the time trying to impress upon the merchants' minds that they ought to spend more time and money on window dressing. But you go out and look at the windows in the stores along this street and what do you see? You see dirty glass, fly-specked show cards, displays that you can't get up any interest in; pretty near everything but what you ought to see. It's funny that so many merchants don't think about their windows. I guess that's all there is to it, they just don't think of them. Anybody with any sense knows that window displays pay mighty well."

"Yes," said Jerry, "I've thought of that a good many times. The merchants out here in the smaller towns don't seem to want to bother with their windows."

"Well, I'll tell you one thing, Jerry, the man who doesn't want to bother with his window displays won't need to be bothered with a very big surplus in his bank account. The shiftless looking window won't draw any trade, but more than that, it will drive trade away. Who wants to trade at a dirty, shiftless store? And who can see a store keep up that kind of windows and not think the rest of the store is the same

way more or less? I can't. I always judge a man first by his clothes and a store by its windows. It's natural to do that. A fellow may be wrong and probably he is in a good many cases, but it's generally a pretty safe bet that people who are shiftless about one thing are shiftless about all.

"You can learn a good deal right here with these windows. Subscribe to one of these correspondence courses in window trimming and take pains to get out of it all you can. Of course there's no use in a man buying any kind of printed information and then shutting it up in a desk or a book-case. Get hold of all the window matter you can and *read it*. Clip all the items of that sort out of your trade papers. Barlow'll be glad to have you save anything you can find in the journals he takes.

"Make yourself a scrap-book of window ideas and if you keep saving that sort of thing you will find by and bye that when you want an idea about how to dress a window, instead of having to think it all out for yourself, you can turn to that scrap-book and find something there that will save you the time and trouble.

"Some fellows take a great interest in their windows for a little while and then get tired and let it go for a month just about as it may happen

to look. They are the sort of men who do everything else on that same plan. A spurt is good while it lasts, but why not keep it up. That's what I've asked several of the merchants in this town. They all admit that it's a good idea to fix up nice window displays but they say they haven't got the time. Of course that's tommy-rot. They've got time for anything they want to do. You'd think, the way they work it, that there was an open and closed season on window dressing just like there is on quail.

"A window display is the greatest bargain seller there is. If a bargain is a real bargain, all that is necessary to start it going is to put a nice showing of it into the windows.

"Printed advertising is good. It is fine, but even at its best it can't show the reader the goods in a way that is up to their really seeing them. The printed matter describes the goods as well as it can. The window shows them and there can't be any better description of how a thing looks than that. We all like to see what the goods look like before we buy them.

"Then there are lots of goods that will sell on sight, they're so attractive, but that won't sell at all well on printed advertising.

"There are a good many ways of making people want the goods, but none of them are up to

displaying them right in the window where everyone going by can see them.

"Of course if the goods aren't right, showing may not help much toward selling them, but unless you are in the mail order business, your customers have got to see most of their goods before they take them away. Better have the goods right, no matter how you sell them.

"You want to learn more about making good window exhibits. Well, you can learn about as well and about as fast from experience as you can in any other way. You don't need to hold yourself down to making one display a week in each of these windows. Make just as many as you have time to get up. I'll bet Barlow won't care much how many times you change displays if it doesn't interfere with your other work."

"I'd be willing to work nights on the windows if I could get up more of them, for the practice and experience," said Jerry.

"That's the right spirit to show, young man. If you feel like that and stick to it, you'll succeed all right no matter what you tackle. A man who really wants to learn can learn anything he wants to if he'll give it over-time and lots of enthusiasm.

"A man ought to be enthusiastic about his work and I don't know of any pleasanter work

or any that ought to make a man more enthusiastic than dressing windows. It's a good deal like playing to an audience. You've got as big an audience as any they ever have over there in the opera house and you can interest them and make them stop and take notice and you can work upon their feelings until they come in and buy.

"Then you have a chance to make displays just as beautiful as you want to. In that way it's a good deal like painting a picture. Oh, window dressing is great work and I'd like to be able myself to do it as well as some fellows I've seen work at it.

"A window is worth something to the store every day just as the newspaper space it buys is worth something every issue of the paper. If a man leaves his window empty a day or half a day unnecessarily, it is just like leaving his newspaper space vacant for an issue. An empty window is costing the store money. No merchant would think of paying for newspaper space that he was to leave empty, or that he was going to fill with a lot of jumbled type that wouldn't spell anything. But every little while a store will leave a window empty a day more than is necessary, or it will put into it temporarily a lot of trash that will look badly.

"If it is going to take a long time to set up a special display, the material ought to be all got ready and right at hand before the old display is taken out, and a fellow ought to have a little plan on paper of the display he's going to make, so that he can work right along without having to stop and figure out what to do next.

"I think city merchants realize better than others what their windows are worth. It may be only that the man in the city finds competition so hot that he knows he can't afford to miss any chance for getting business. Anyway you seldom see a city store window left empty all day. And the best ones are all trimmed at night so that valuable daytime won't be used up dressing them.

"It's my opinion that the best way to do is to trim the window with the curtain up and let people see what is going on. Somebody working in the window will have all the effect of a motion display, and nothing stops people any quicker than that.

"Of course there's a know how, a theory in window dressing that a fellow ought to have if he's going very far in that line and he can get that out of some of the books and lessons published about it. It's the theory that helps a man to put the right colors together and keep the

"Material ought to be got ready before the old display is taken out."

wrong ones apart, to place the goods where they will be the easiest seen and in the light that will show up their good qualities best. I believe that it pays a man to learn the scientific side of his work, whatever it is. Then he knows the reasons for things.

"These complicated windows that some men get up, gingerbready looking shows that have so much fancy work to them that you can't make head or tail to them without a chart; they don't sell goods like the simple displays. Simplicity in window displays is a good deal like simplicity in art or in a woman's gown. You know, the most expensive and the most attractive costumes are usually the simplest.

"Simplicity is easy to understand. It points out something that anyone can see and it points out just one thing and it doesn't confuse the mind. A mixed up window is just like a mixed up advertisement and it's a good deal like these old 'Hats, caps, boot and shoes' advertisements that our grandfathers used to run.

"I said for you to keep a scrap-book; well, I'll advise you to go further and besides saving everything you see printed about windows, write down everything you hear and make a note of every good window display you see in another store. And if I were you and was going on a

vacation, I believe I'd take in a city or two or some big towns and just make a study of the way they handle their window displays, not only in your line, but in everybody's line, because a jeweler for instance, will often get a good window idea from a cigar store or a grocer from a furniture man and so on."

"I had thought of taking a little trip around, kind of on that plan," said Jerry. "I was going to the city and then take some trolley trips into big towns around there and look and see what other stores do to get up good looking windows."

"Son, you've got the right idea. Keep your eyes opened wide when you're trotting around and you'll see a lot of things that will give you ideas for your use later. But don't think you can remember all the things you see. Set 'em down. You won't be able to turn to 'em when you want 'em if you don't write 'em out.

"I've seen a lot of different kinds of good windows made with dolls. If you can hit the human idea, put the human touch into a few dolls used in a display, you will stop the people. The nearer you get to a reality in your display, the better. If I were a window dresser, I'd have on hand all the time a whole family of dolls in different kinds of costumes and I'd get up window displays that would show actual scenes on a re-

duced scale. For one thing, the dolls will get the kids' attention and they'll go home and tell their mothers about them and that means more people coming to look. I think that a supply of dolls is just about as necessary for window dressing as colored crepe paper, and nobody can get along without that occasionally.

"A fellow's foolish to try to get along without window fixtures. It used to be that nobody had any real fixtures for a window except the big department store folks, and they didn't have much. But now anybody can afford some kind of fixtures. You can get them in nickel, or in glass or wood or in wood and glass. You ought to have a few pieces of plate glass too. They'll come in handy. And mirrors will keep people standing in front of the windows longer. The men laugh at the women for their liking to look at themselves in the glass, but I tell you those same men don't miss any chances to do the same thing. Work in a mirror as often as you can where it will give a person on the outside a chance to see himself (or herself) as others see him and you'll make a hit by it every time.

"There isn't any kind of advertising where it's as important to have the goods advertised of a timely sort and advertised in a timely way as in the windows. Have the goods in the windows

that the people are thinking about buying now or in a very short time. Don't fill up the windows with goods that sold well last month and that are ancient history now. Keep the windows up to date and then some. The store that shows the advancing season in its windows will get the first demand for the goods.

"Window displays are made to show the people what you have to sell and to make them want to buy it. If you keep that in mind you can't go far astray.

"A window that is made just to look pretty may do that and yet not produce any appreciable amount of business. There must be an idea behind the display. It must send the observer on his way thinking about the goods and carrying in his mind some one good point concerning them. Plenty of expensive window shows stop with merely attracting attention. They show freaks or live animals or something in motion and whatever it is, it bears no relation to the goods and the fellow who stops and looks it over goes away thinking about a tame white rat or a ball that rolls around and around. The man who made the display didn't have any connecting link between the attraction and the goods to be advertised. The display was a show, not an advertisement at all. Shows are all right. I like a

good show myself. Put them in the window if you want to, but don't forget that it's business you want more than a curious crowd standing in front in idle curiosity.

"Drawing a crowd doesn't necessarily mean drawing business, you know. The attraction that doesn't advertise goods is pretty apt to draw a crowd that hasn't much money and is only putting in time seeing what can be seen on the street. Better one woman standing in front of a window trying to decide what article to go in and buy than forty men and women and boys haw-hawing over the antics of a monkey and then going on about their business — if they have any.

"One thing you don't want to forget and that is that the manufacturers that make the goods that sell best in your store are, most of them, ready to help you to get up good window displays of their goods. Lots of those people have ready made displays that only need to be set up. Too many of those 'dummy' shows are worth just about what they cost you. They are trash. Some aren't and for the good ones I haven't anything bad to say, but for the bad ones I haven't anything good to say.

"If the manufacturer of the line you want to push in the window has not sent you any window

matter of use, or information about any, write and ask him what he can do for you. Get up a plan of a window trim and send it to him and ask him what he can do to help you make it a success. Live, advertising manufacturers are doing more and more all the time to help the retailer make good displays. They know, better than the retailer himself, what those displays are worth.

"Say, where's Barlow? I didn't come in here to talk an arm off from you about window dressing. I wanted to see the boss."

"He's gone out," said Jerry. "I'm glad you didn't think of that before or I'd have missed all these pointers. I'm going into this window business stronger and I'll be up to the house some night to get some more of your good opinions. I'm sure Mr. Barlow will let me do anything I want to about the windows and I'm thinking of making some improvements in the construction of them."

"That's right, Jerry. When you see a chance to improve the store or the service in it, you put it up to the boss every time. He'll appreciate it and it won't do you any harm either. Well, tell him that you saw me. So long!"

FIFTEENTH TALK

DEVELOPING HIGH CLASS TRADE

"Well, where the dickens are you going?" Tobias asked Barlow as the latter walked into the smoking car and took a seat beside the Old Storekeeper who was already comfortably located and waiting for the afternoon New York train to pull out.

"Oh, I'm going on a little errand that you told me a while ago I'd better do one of these days."

"Oh, I see. Well, you have my best wishes for a successful trip. Bring her back with you if you can."

"I'll do my best," replied Barlow. "By the way, I'm going to be in the city over a day and I believe I'll look up a jobber or two and see if I can't get hold of one that carries a higher class of goods than those fellows we've been buying of for years."

"That's a mighty good idea, John. When I was in business we always thought that as long

"Barlow walked into the smoking car."

as a wholesale house treated us right we had to buy everything from them and never look at any other line. That isn't the way to do it now though. It does well enough to buy from one house as much as you can and keep them interested in you, but a man's a fool if he doesn't see what the other houses can do for him.

"And then, as you say, these people you've been buying from don't carry as high class a line as they might and you can't develop the business in their kinds of goods unless you get in the way of offering better and better goods all the time. You want to keep hitching the quality of your line up all the time. If you keep just the same grade of goods year after year, your customers will buy just that grade as long as they are satisfied with it and go to some other store when they want something better.

"Of course you might not have any call for a better article in any line than you are keeping, but one of your customers who thought he was perfectly satisfied with your kind of goods might get into another store and be shown something that would look better, taste better, wear better or be more stylish and he would willingly pay more for it and keep on buying that better grade while you wondered why you had lost his trade.

"And about the first step to take in prepar-

ing to raise the class of your stock and consequently to improve the class of your customers, is to get to buying from better people, people who handle classier goods."

"Well," said Barlow, "I didn't have it all thought out like that but I had about come to the same conclusion. I've been getting a first class business since you got me started up the hill again but I don't seem to be getting the best families in town. I don't know who is getting them. I have an idea that they are sending away for a lot of the goods they use because they can't get them in Hampton."

"You're on the right track, my boy. It's the old story of a man not being able to sell the goods if he doesn't have 'em. This idea that nothing will sell except what we are already having a call for is all bosh. There's a lot more merchants stuck with buying cheap trash than ever got stuck by buying goods that are too good.

"Of course the big business is the business of the masses, the average folks who don't have a whole lot of money, but all the same the trade of the people who do have money is mighty nice trade and in a big town a man can sometimes get along with nothing else. There's quite a lot of families in Hampton that have money enough to buy the best of things. If you're selling them

cheaper grades, it's because you don't have the better ones or don't call their attention to them.

"A little time spent in explaining to a man how and why this better article will give him better service and save him money will make money for you and make satisfied customers too because when a fellow gets the goods home he thinks of their quality oftener than he does of their cost.

"Besides the best quality interesting the people with the most money it generally interests the careful buyers who don't have much money. The man who has good, sound judgment and a slim pocketbook is pretty apt to buy as good a grade of goods as he can afford because he knows it pays him.

"Of course it takes time to make sales of better goods. That is, when you ask a man to pay more money than he has been in the habit of paying for an article for a certain purpose, he is going to want to know why and wherefore. He won't just take your word off-hand that the goods are better and consequently cheaper in the end. You will have to show him that they are better and that they will save him money. That means that you've got to be posted on the quality and the reasons for it in the case of the better goods. A man ought to know all about the goods he sells anyway. He can't be much of a

salesman along any line unless he is wise on his stock.

"And if a merchant is going to push high class goods and cater to the high grade trade, he has got to have high class help. Cheap, careless, ignorant, sloppy clerks can't get or hold the trade of high class efficient people who know quality in a man when they see it, as well as in goods. Why, look at this conductor coming! Couldn't you tell by the way he walks and by the looks of his uniform that he's working on a first rate train? There's something about him that shows it.

"A good many merchants think of the high class trade as the trade of millionaires. This is a mistake. Such people usually buy the best grade of goods and belong in the best class of customers, but the high class trade includes anybody who will buy high class articles.

"These people who pay more money usually give their buying more consideration. They take more time to it. Sometimes they are pretty finicky, but it's worth while to bear with their peculiarities. It pays."

"I have some of that kind of customers all right," said Barlow. "You know old Granny Bitters, and Joe Potts?"

"Yes, they're finicky. No doubt about it, but

they're the sort that are finicky by nature, not by pocketbook. They're just naturally too stingy to live. Why, you know the time Billy Finnegin ordered a cord of wood from Joe Potts and told him that it must be tip-top wood or he wouldn't pay for it? No! Well Joe brought the cord of wood and it was the worst looking 'buzz-wood' you ever saw; all little bits of sticks about an inch or two through. Of course Billy kicked but what do you think Joe told him? Why, he said 'Didn't you say you wanted tip-top wood? If you can get any that comes from nearer the tip top of the trees you can't get it o' me.'

"One thing that's worth learning about the best trade is that you are wasting time and losing trade by trying to sell them something they don't want. I just believe that the best salesmanship with the millionaire class is giving them what they ask for and asking no question and telling no lies. Those people want high grade, standard advertised goods. They know what they want — or they think they do — and you just make 'em mad by trying to sell them something just as good.

"They aren't as a rule personal acquaintances that you have any drag with. You're their merchant. They decide what they want and all they want you to do is to deliver the goods."

"Didn't you say you wanted tip-top wood?"

"I've had a few little experiences with such people," admitted Barlow. "There's Mrs. Loftis. Once or twice she came in and wanted some goods we don't carry and I tried to get her to let me show her something else of the same kind. Not for a minute! I couldn't get the goods off the shelf before she was outside getting into her automobile."

"Well, there you've got it. That's just the way those people feel about the things they want. You may have something just as good. You may have something even better, but it's mighty seldom you get a chance to sell it to them if you don't have what they came for. A fellow's got to carry the advertised brands nowadays. They will go a long way toward helping him to get the best trade.

"A man has got to be careful too about his advertising if he wants it to attract such people. You know yourself that it wouldn't do to advertise the classiest goods in the store on a big, cheap poster that looks like a fire sale sheet. And it doesn't get you anything to use that same fire sale style in the newspapers either. The advertising of high grade goods ought to be high grade advertising. It ought to read like high class talk and it ought to look like high class printing. This is the truest of the kind of ad-

vertisements you send right to the people by mail.

"If you aren't willing to have your store judged by the advertisement, don't you send it out. Just think over the advertising that comes to you every day or so and see if you don't pretty near size up a house by the kind of printed matter it sends out.

"High class advertising to high class folks ought to have more white space on it. It ought to have a more dignified tone. The type ought not to be so black or so circus-postery. I never was very strong for a lot of dignity in advertising. I believe in pretty plain talk, but there's a happy medium. The too dignified advertising doesn't get enough readers and the sensational kind is passed right by by the high class trade. It gives your store a cheap reputation with them and it is pretty hard to get rid of such a reputation with folks who want 'Tiffany' on their stationery and silverware boxes and 'Park and Tilford' on their groceries.

"You don't want to be subservient to the aristocratic customers. They do not think any more of a man because he gets down on his knees and begs them to buy from him. But you do want to be respectful and show some consideration for their opinions and a great deal of appreciation for their trade. I tell you human

nature's just the same in a millionaire as it is in a truck driver. People are born sensitive or selfish, generous or grouchy. It ain't money that makes 'em so. When you get right down to it, it's the man you're dealing with and not his pocketbook. If you get to the man, you'll get to his pocketbook all right, all right.

"There isn't any much better way of advertising to the best families and to the best class of trade of all kinds than by actual typewritten personal letters. Suppose you pick out a dozen people whose trade you are very anxious to get and just write each of them a personal letter every two weeks for a little while, calling their special attention to some certain thing that you know they might use but that they maybe don't know that you sell. That is sure to get under their belt. Anyone will read a real letter. And after you get the interest of most of the first lot, take up another little list and work it in the same way. Give 'em personal attention and they'll give you personal attention.

"There is a class of trade that is really a part of the high class kind that wants what it buys to show its value right on the face of it. It has money to spend, that class, and it wants everyone to know it. People like that need to be given a show for their money. They like ostentation

and flash. If those people want to buy their high priced goods right out in the middle of the store so that everyone can see what they are spending, help them to do it. If you do you will make them buy more yet. When such people get to spending they buy easily and they don't stop to ask too many questions. Help them to go their limit.

"But there is another class that buys less flashy goods but even more expensive ones. These people want actual value rather than show. They want the finest quality and they are discriminating. And they don't want their purchases advertised on the housetops. They are quiet, refined, sensitive people who would rather buy in a quiet corner where they can discuss the goods without outsiders hearing or seeing what is going on. Learn to know these people and to please them and you'll get their money to put with that of the new-rich.

"Sometimes rich people have idiosyncrasies that are worth studying. They have their little pet economies. They have never paid more than a certain amount for this or that necessity of housekeeping. True, they could just as well pay ten times the price and never feel it but they like to economize in those certain ways. And very likely they do not care to have everyone

know it. Show such feeling a proper consideration and keep them coming where they do not have to explain everytime what they want and why they buy the cheaper brand.

"It is a good plan to see that all the clerks, especially the new ones learn the names of these local 'Four hundred' folks. It saves a good many uncomfortable occurrences if the new clerk does not make any bad break with the Moneybags family when their purchasing agent comes in."

"People with money, the same as people without it, like to be called by name when they come to the store. It gives them a feeling of importance and makes them want to come again. It is easy to instruct the older clerks to mention certain customers' names to the new help whenever a chance offers.

"If you have goods to deliver to customers who like style, don't send them around in a cheap, dirty cart pulled by a broken down nag. Don't send them by a barefoot boy with ragged clothes. Whatever kind of delivery you are using, make it look as if the store had some snap behind it. A few brass buttons and a natty cap will go a long way toward making a stylish delivery.

"Why, if I was running a store that had its

delivering done by a small boy outside of school hours, I'd have a jacket and cap for him that would make him look like business style. The trouble isn't that storekeepers can't afford to look after these little things that count but that they don't think of it. You think, 'Gee! I can't afford a liveried delivery!' perhaps, but how much would a cap and a jacket and a box of shoe polish cost? I tell you it will pay a man to look after these matters pretty closely if he is anxious to get the trade of the people who have the most money.

"One thing that the best class of trade demands is that you make no mistakes with them. You can make mistakes in sending goods to your friends and they'll say 'That's all right. Accidents will happen' but by George! when you make a mistake on Mr. Bank Account's order you'll hear from him with a call down that will make you think you're in the hands of the law. Mr. B. A. hasn't any more right to call you down than your friend perhaps. His money isn't any better, but there's more of it and he's used to having people step lively when he speaks and he's used to having things done the way he orders them done. If you can't do them that way, you'll mighty quick find yourself minus his patronage.

"It may be foolish for him to act that way. I'm not holding any brief for him, but he does do it and when we're going after trade we have to deal with facts as they are and not as they ought to be.

"Now, you've got a good premium scheme working. Don't think for a minute that your best trade doesn't know or care anything about it. Something for nothing appeals just about as strongly to one person as to another. See that the people who are entitled to checks for premiums get them. The folks who have money may be even more bashful about kicking when you forget than those who haven't and they may try to make it look as if they didn't care, but they do just the same."

"I've noticed that much already," said Barlow. "The women who have the most money are the most anxious to get a bargain or to get a free premium. I do all I can to encourage them."

"You're on the right track and — say, what station is this? Hey, conductor, let me out! This is my stop!" and Tobias grabbed his bag and rushed for the door as the conductor pulled the bell rope and slowed the train down just as it was almost out of the yards.

"I knew he meant to get off here," said the

conductor to Barlow, "but I didn't notice he hadn't till we started up and I came in here. Pretty keen old chap, that."

"You bet he is," said Barlow. "Nobody's got anything on him in the storekeeping line," and he turned to see Tobias waving his hand from the bank beside the last switch block.

SIXTEENTH TALK

SELF-SELLING GOODS

The Old Storekeeper was kept away from home longer than he had expected to remain and it was some three weeks later than our last chapter when at last he returned.

One of the first things his wife told him was that John Barlow had come back and brought his wife with him.

"His wife!" ejaculated Tobias.

"Why yes," said his better half. "He went away and got married to Dolly Dingle and brought her right home with him."

"Well, I'll be—"

"Tobias!"

"Well, anyway I'll be jiggered! I went away on the same train with John and he said he was going to try to make up a quarrel he'd had with Dolly but he didn't say anything about getting married."

"Probably he didn't. When you were coming

out to Illinois to marry me did you shout it at everybody you met on the road?"

"Well, pretty near. I remember telling the conductor and the brakeman on the train."

"John's got an awfully pretty wife," said Mrs. Jenkins.

"Yes, and he's got a wife that's something more than just pretty, if I'm any judge. Dolly Dingle, I mean Dolly — Mrs. Barlow, knows a thing or two about a business like John's and I'll bet she'll give him some pointers that'll do him good. I'm going down and see him, or them, whichever it happens to be."

So Tobias hurried down to the store and found that it was "them" sure enough, for Dolly was at work in the store rearranging, or rather directing the rearranging of stock, while John sat in his revolving office chair trying to work at his books but looking rather foolish when he saw Tobias come in.

After the greetings that the occasion demanded were over between the three, Mrs. Barlow said,

"Mr. Jenkins, I've been wanting to ask you something ever since I got back and have been helping John here. Now, we have a fine stock of standard goods but we seem to be short on the odds and ends, the lines that sell themselves

and that bring people in and give them a chance to see what else we have. I've been talking the five, ten and twenty-five cent idea to John but he seems to think it would cheapen our store to handle a lot of such goods and I don't know but he's right. What do you think about it?"

"You put it right square up to me, don't you? The last time I was talking to John it was about a very different line of goods. We were discussing the ways of getting the higher priced and higher qualities of stock to sell better and it may be that anything I say in favor of the bargain counter idea may look as if it gave that other talk the lie.

"In the first place I'm going to admit right off the reel that if a man is catering exclusively, exclusively mind you, to the high class trade, he'd better leave out anything like the five, ten and twenty-five cent counters, bargain basement, etc. He'd better stick to class. But in Hampton and most other towns there isn't enough of the exclusive high class trade to make a business a success on that alone. It's only in the big city that there is, and even there if a man wants to build up a really big business he needs the trade of everybody he can get to come into the store.

"You want the high class trade and you want

the trade of the so called 'common people.' Well, you can get them both. Keep the goods for the exclusive customers in places where they won't be cheapened by direct comparison with bargain stock. Have your classiest goods by themselves where the people who are buying them can buy them in a quiet, reserved way, and have the bargain goods collected in places where they won't bring any discomfort from crowding or disgust with cheapness upon the few customers you have of the most aristocratic class.

"I believe in a separate bargain department for bargain goods, but you aren't in shape to handle that here just now, so you can develop separate bargain tables or counters.

"Just as soon as you can afford to enlarge your store, plan a big section to be devoted to five, ten and twenty-five cent goods of the quick selling, live wire sort. Those goods don't tie up much money and they turn over fast. They make you rather small profits perhaps but they make you a lot of them and they bring people into the store.

"A lot of general stores and big and successful special stores are losing unnecessary trade to competing departments in other stores that carry a line of self-selling goods to bring the people into their places of business.

"You probably may not want to stick in a five cent or a ten cent counter anywhere in your store in a way to give any cheapening look to the place, but that does not interfere with your displaying on a table there a line of attractive goods with a big 'Your choice for a nickel' over them, or over in another corner a line of ten cent goods similarly arranged. And a twenty-five cent counter is not cheap enough to be called shoddy in any sense.

"No matter what sort of a store a man is running, he can make it pay in many ways to have one or more tables or counters where he displays a line of goods at twenty-five cents for your choice. A 'quarter' is a popular price for innumerable things and it may include not only the goods that sell for that much apiece, but also those that sell two or three or more for a 'quarter.'

"Such a counter serves as an outlet for a good many pieces of goods that are really higher priced but that need to be closed out for what they will bring. Still nobody wants to think for a minute that a special price counter loaded with dead stock will be a success just because that dead stock is marked 'way down. If there is any department in a store that needs new, live goods, it is the bargain department, whether that

department is a whole floor or just a little table in one corner.

"Some merchants' idea of a bargain display in the window or anywhere is a pile of old stock just thrown in together looking as if it was right from the scrap heap. They don't realize that the older the goods and the worse their actual condition, the more care ought to be used in making them look good to the public.

"In order to make a success of any kind of a bargain department the merchant must not be afraid to pay for leaders to use in that department. Anybody can pay from $1.50 to $2 for goods to sell on a 25c counter and make a little money on them, but that sort of work will not make much of a success of the proposition. You must be willing and ready to pay $2.75 or $3.50 for a few goods and $2.25 for many and you must have the face to put in with them some that cost no more than $1.25.

"It is the average of profit that you are concerned with. Suppose there is a loss on one sale. If it is more than made up by the next sale which is due directly to the losing sale, you are ahead in the end. The five and ten cent stores get their business by giving bargains. They do not advertise much in the newspapers. They employ cheap help and give poor service,

but their leaders do their advertising for them and you don't need to have me tell you that they make money. You can make money selling some things at less than they cost you just the same as those five and ten cent stores. An occasional leader that will make people sit up and take notice will do more real advertising for your store than the same amount of money spent in almost any other way.

"You see, a good advertisement will bring in a lot of the people who read it, but not many of them will say anything about it to anyone else. Every woman that gets a good bargain will tell her neighbors about it and it will go right along down the line, helping boost your store as it goes.

"Why, talk about bargains, I've known a merchant to buy a couple of hundred umbrellas at thirty-five to forty cents apiece and advertise them for sale at ten cents each on a certain day. I've known a store to sell 250 heavy iron shovels in seventeen minutes as an advertising stunt, getting ten cents apiece for them when they cost several times that. It takes a little nerve to put on a thing like that, but when you look at it as advertising and charge the loss up to the advertising expense, it doesn't look so bad.

"There is a lot of self-selling merchandise that

doesn't belong in the five, ten and twenty-five cent class. The manufacturers of many novelties put their goods up on display cards and if the dealer buys full dozens or whatever number come on a card, he will get the advantage of the display and if these goods are set out where they show they will move off without much help. Of course some of these display cards or racks are pretty cheap looking affairs and don't add any to the class of the goods on them, but you can cut out that kind. The trouble with these display cards in most stores is that they are allowed to get soiled and broken before the stock is all sold and the last of the lot drags terribly because beside having lost its novelty it is handicapped by being shown on a card that looked like the last run of shad and would prejudice anybody against gold dollars marked 50c each.

"When the card the goods are shown on advertises the fact that the stock is old and moving slowly and advertises it louder than it advertises the merits of the goods, the goods won't go. Depend upon it; the people notice those things. A fly-specked show card half full of some 25c novelty may have been there on the show case so long that the proprietor of the store doesn't notice it any more than he'd notice a wart on his nose after wearing it forty years,

but that doesn't prevent other folks from noticing the disadvantageous side of the affair.

"When the show card or rack gets soiled and can't be cleaned up, it must be destroyed and the goods given their chance in a tray if they cannot be put on a fresh card of some sort. It is worth while for you to save display cards that don't get broken and by pasting a catchy picture on them or covering them with clean paper, use them again in the place of one that has to be thrown out before the goods are gone.

"And that reminds me that I saw a lot of home made display cards and racks the other day on the show case in a store down the line. This merchant had made cards out of old display easels by recovering them and pasting pictures from magazines on them. He took some articles that didn't come on a card but that were advertised in the magazines and he pasted on an old card the advertisement cut out of the magazine and printed a price on it and put the goods on and set it out. This was a pretty good scheme. You see, it connected up in the customer's mind right away the goods with the advertisement he'd seen. It worked out well and he was pretty clever about making good looking easels.

"Displaying goods is what makes them self-

"A sleepy old grocer with no regard for cleanliness or order."

selling in reality. The article that is tucked away in a drawer or a cupboard will not sell itself. Someone may come in and ask for it but that sale was made outside of the store by some kind of advertisement or other method of creating demand. By self-selling I mean selling itself to a customer who did not come in to buy that article but saw it and was pleased with it and decided to buy, all with no assistance from the clerk.

"So you see, self-selling goods have got to be displayed or they won't be self-selling. And of course the better you display them, the better they'll sell. the more of 'em will sell.

"They ought to be kept clean and made to look their very best because the better the goods look to buyers, the quicker they will buy. When you drop into a store to buy a cigar, do you feel like picking up one from a box on top of the case, when its broken and dusty lid advertises the fact that it has taken a month to sell a part of the box? Or do you, Mrs. Barlow, like to buy fruit of a sleepy old grocer with no regard for cleanliness or order? Of course you don't. Even the man who runs a dirty store (I don't mean you, John), likes to do his own buying in a clean store. The man whose self-selling merchandise isn't self-selling by a long shot, buys the self-selling merchandise that he wants in

other stores where they do display it the right way.

"The merchant doesn't think. That's what makes his self-sellers turn into stickers when the lot is half gone. The man who doesn't think is right in the same class with the man that didn't know it was loaded and the man that rocked the boat. I haven't any special use for any of 'em and I never knew of one who made a success on what he was trying to do. I'll tell you right now, Mrs. Barlow, I don't consider your husband one of that kind. He's a pretty good business man and if you stick right to him with plenty of good advice, he's sure to make a merchant prince of himself one of these days and then you'll be glad you married him."

"Oh, I'm glad now," said the bride blushing. "He makes a fine husband and I always did think he was a good business man."

"Yes, I know," said Tobias, "all women think their husbands are fine business men, but it isn't because the women know so much about business usually, it's because the men are their husbands. I wouldn't go far in accepting a man's business reputation from his wife. I wouldn't be surprised though in your case if your opinion might be worth something because you are a business woman. It isn't very often a business

woman marries a business man. I don't know why that is. I'm not going to say whether it's because the business woman does or does not know more about business men than other women.

"But you're going to find that John will make a lot of business mistakes. Every business man does. He probably won't make many that will do much harm, but he's liable to make occasional ones that will cost him and you some money. Just make up your mind right at the outset that he isn't perfect and that while he is doing his level best and using the best judgment he has, still he will go wrong at times. I wouldn't give a cent for a man who never made any mistakes. The only way a man can be safe from them is by never doing anything but the same old things he's always done. Any man who tries new plans and tries to advance will make mistakes. Let him make 'em. You stand right by him and help him get over the mistakes he makes and he'll be all right.

"A woman can help her husband in his store in more ways than just by getting into the store and tearing things all to pieces. She has good judgment in the matter of arrangement and decoration and she ought to help the man with that judgment. I don't have but mighty little use for

a woman who doesn't help any about her husband's business except by spending the money it makes. If she isn't really interested in his work, in his way of making money for her to spend, it is awfully poor policy and awfully poor business for her to show it.

"She ought at least to put up a bluff that she is interested. You can't blame a husband for getting a little sore if his wife never asks him anything about his work and expects him to spend all the time at home at noon or at supper time listening to what she's been doing to have a good time while he's been working.

"Then I know wives who never think of asking their husbands when they come home to dinner what their work or their difficulties of the day have been, but they sit there and pour into patient ears all the little penny worries of the household, the whole bunch of which don't amount to a row of pins compared with the responsibility of some one transaction the husband has had on his mind for days.

"It's the fashion nowadays for women to claim to be the equal of men in business and other affairs. I don't say whether I think they are or aren't, but I do say that a woman needn't tell me that she is entitled to share alike with her husband in all the advantages that result

from his business, when she isn't willing to share in any of its responsibilities. Of course women have their responsibilities at home. The woman with a household to manage needs a business head to handle it properly and there is plenty of worry about the work, but the tendency is for the man with a store to try to get money enough so that his wife won't have to do any more of the household managing than is necessary and the more he tries to accomplish this, the more work he himself will have and the more sympathy and help he ought to have from his wife.

"Of course a man needs a change when he leaves his store and comes home, but I don't know as it's such an agreeable change to be invited to come home three times a day or twice or once to listen to a record of the household's tribulations after they are all over and settled up.

"The wife who meets her husband when he comes home and greets him with a smile and a sympathetic inquiry that rub out the care and worry lines from his face will find him pretty ready to listen to any account of the troubles she's had and I advise 'em both to get to some pleasanter subject as soon as they can.

"It's all right for you two young honey-

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mooners to stand there and giggle and you probably think I got this out of a page of the 'Ladies' Home Journal,' but I didn't. It's the best kind of business sense and you'll know it as well as I do when you've lived as long. A man's business success is more dependent upon the happiness of his family life than you have any idea. But I'm not worrying any about you folks. You'll get along all right and I wish you both many happy returns of your wedding day. Now I've got to go home and explain to my wife why I stayed away so long on that last trip. Come up and take dinner with us Sunday, will you? Good bye."

THE END

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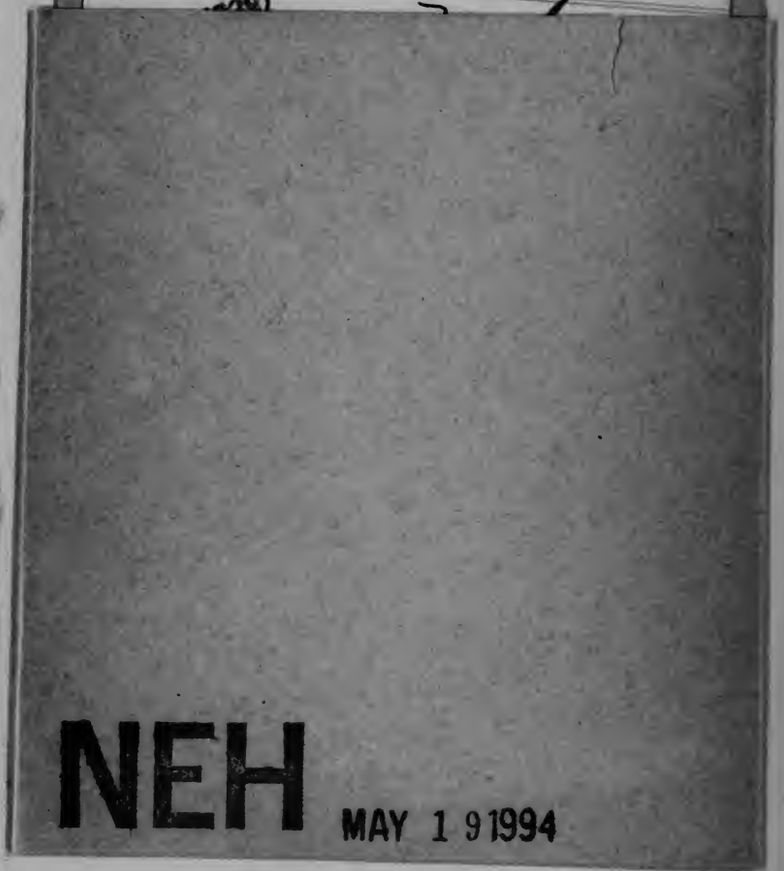

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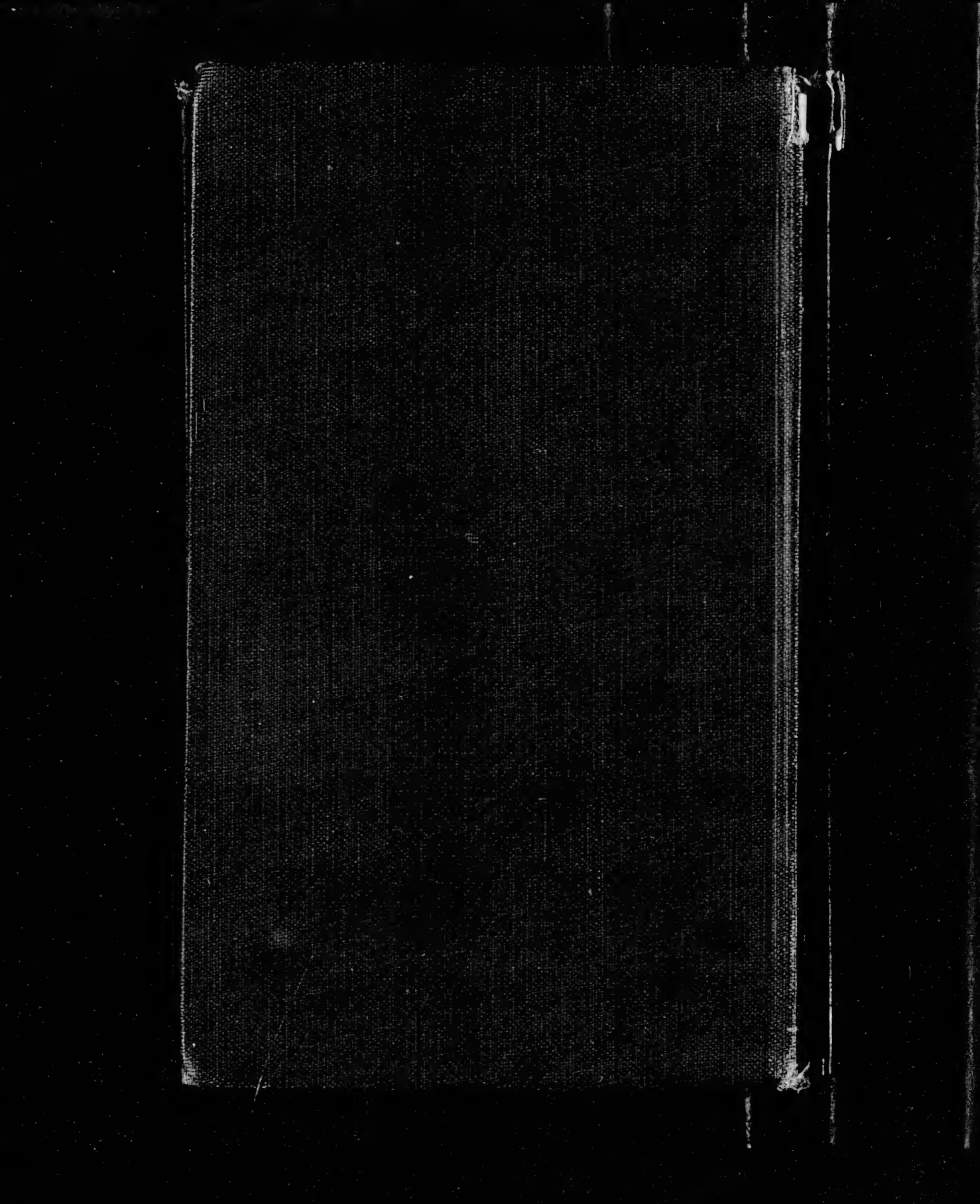

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